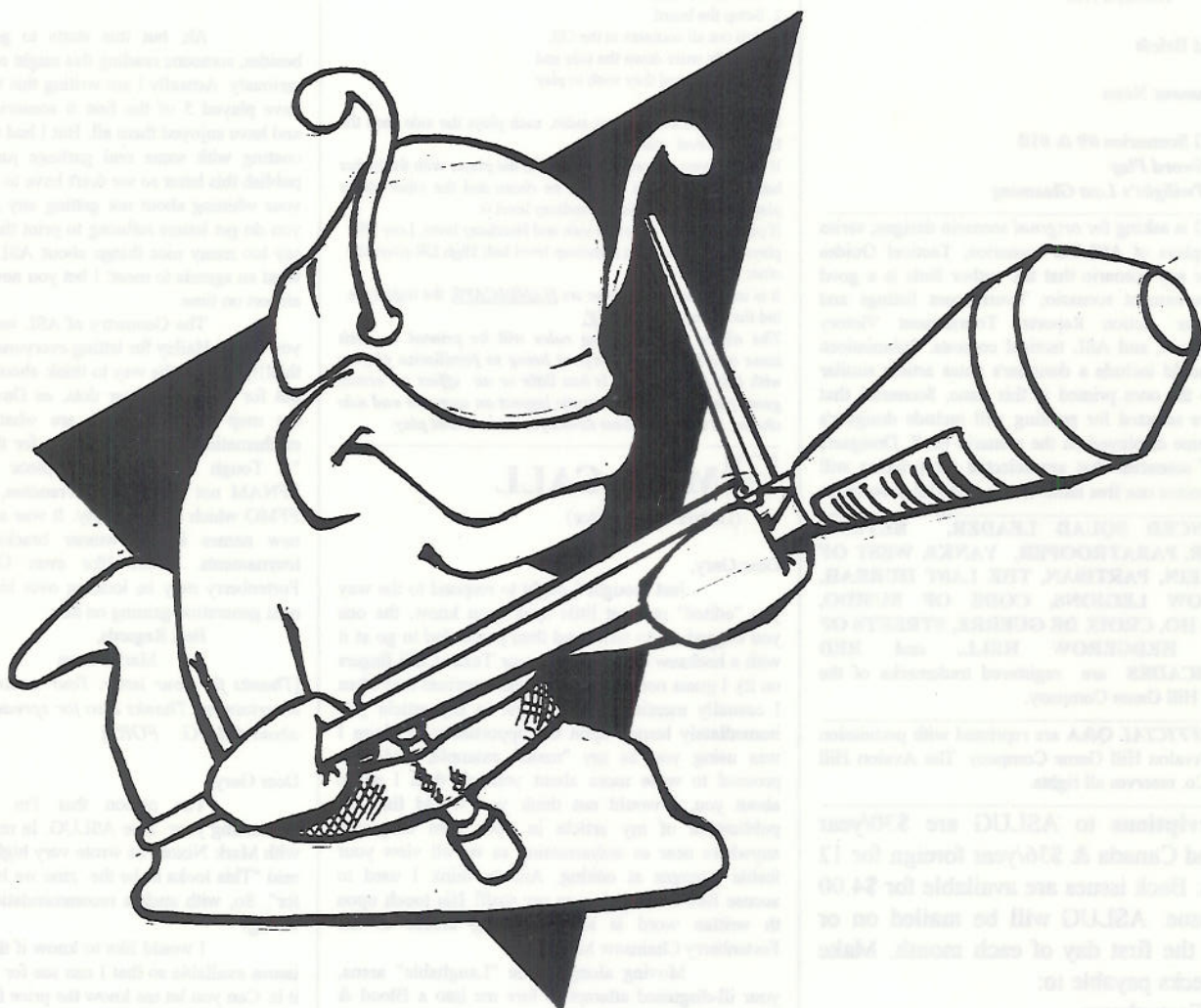


# A.S.L.U.G.

ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER UNION of GAMERS

ISSUE FIVE JULY, 1993

THE SOURCE FOR ASL NEWS



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ASLUG is asking for *original* scenario designs; series replays of ASLUG scenarios; Tactical Guides for any scenario that the author feels is a good tournament scenario; Tournament listings and After Action Reports; Tournament Victory reports; and ASL tactical contests. Submissions should include a designer's notes article similar to the ones printed in this issue. Scenarios that are selected for printing will include designer's name displayed on the scenario itself. Designers of scenarios that are selected for printing will receive one free issue of the ASLUG newsletter.

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## Tournament Coverage

Tournament Directors are encouraged to send in any information on their tournaments as soon as possible. Early release of information usually yields greater attendance.

## AUSTRALIAN SCENARIO HANDICAPPING

All ASLUG scenarios will have the Australian scenario handicapping system as a standard feature. Any scenario submitted to ASLUG should have these handicaps included. Several ASLers are presently working on devising handicaps for official Avalon Hill scenarios, which will see print in FFE. These efforts should give some neglected scenarios a second life.

The purpose of this article is to explain the workings of the handicapping system.

Each scenario will have six levels of handicap bidding.

Axis 1-3 and Allied 1-3

(Players may also bid 0 for either side, indicating a desire to play that side as printed on the scenario card with no handicapping.)

After being assigned an opponent, players should follow these steps in order.

1. Choose a scenario.
2. Setup the board.
3. Pull out all counters in the OB.
4. Secretly write down the side and Handicap level they wish to play.
5. Reveal choices.

If players choose different sides, each plays the side and the Handicap level chosen.

If both players choose the same side, the player with the higher handicap level plays the side he chose and the other player plays the opposite side at Handicap level 0.

If players choose the same side and Handicap level, Low DR plays side chosen with Handicap level bid; High DR plays the other side at level 0.

It is important to note these are **HANDICAPS**, the higher the bid the more you **GIVE UP**.

*The above Handicapping rules will be printed in each issue of ASLUG, the purpose being to familiarize players with this fine variant. It has little or no effect on actual game play, yet has a dramatic impact on scenario and side choice. It is an excellent device for tournament play.*

## MAIL CALL

(Letters to the Editor)

Dear Gary,

Just thought I ought to respond to the way you "edited" my last little spiel (you know, the one you begged me to write and then proceeded to go at it with a hacksaw once you got your Texas-Chili fingers on it). I guess none of us should be surprised that when I casually mentioned your name in my article you immediately leaped upon the opportunity to claim I was using you as my "main" example, and then proceed to write more about yourself than I wrote about you. I would not think you would find the publication of my article in your own magazine anywhere near as embarrassing as we all view your feeble attempts at editing. And to think I used to accuse Rex of chopping-up my stuff! His touch upon th written word is as a soothing breeze to the Fortenberry Chainsaw Massacre.

Moving along to the "Laughable" arena, your ill-disguised attempt to lure me into a Blood & Money ASL showdown is simply too good to be true, although you may want to freshen your memory of our last tournament meeting (ASLOK '91). Remember *Bungle in The Jungle*, after which you retired to your motel room to rewrite the ASLRB to suit your own dreams since the way it is written didn't seem to be working for you? Kinda odd the way you have gone into print about not remembering this little escapade, a mere two issues after your response to my last letter in which you claimed it was my memory which was failing me.

And what about the other tournament meeting we had that year (this one was at Michicon) in which my troops whupped on you so bad you conceded on turn #1. My, my, how soon these things are forgotten. (I'll leave some extra room here for your very clever, witty, and totally enlightening comments which are sure to follow.)

*[I can't refuse your ever so gracious (at least for an Ohio cretin) invitation. Regarding your claims of some antiquated victory in a certain scenario at a certain place, I plead the fifth (besides, I don't recall ever having been to Michigan. Perhaps you have photographs or other evidence admissible in a court of law) and leave you to your delusions of competence. On another note, I never lent much credence to the allegations of our esteemed comrade, the ex-Michiganer, Eric 'the Red' Baker, but after receiving this bit of vituperation I am forced to view Mr. Baker's comments with a glimmer of firsthand understanding. It seems at least some of you Ohioans are driven to blindly strike out at any and all targets that you perceive to be within your vile and spiteful reach even though no provocation has been offered. Thank you for this glimpse into the psyche of the unhinged. FORT]*

Ah, but this starts to get tiresome, and besides, someone reading this might actually take it all seriously. Actually I am writing this to let you know I have played 5 of the first 6 scenarios from ASLUG and have enjoyed them all. But I had to hide the sugar-coating with some real garbage just to get you to publish this letter so we don't have to read any more of your whining about not getting any letters, and when you do get letters refusing to print them because they say too many nice things about ASLUG. Good grief, what an agenda to meet! I bet you never make it to the airport on time.

The Geometry of ASL was brilliant (curse you David Hailey for letting everyone else know about this!!!). This is the way to think about LOS, but watch out for those off-center dots, as David mentions, for the map board graphics are what count, not the mathematical truth. Watch out for the typo in Guy's "A Tough Nut to Crack" piece which refers to FFNAM not applying in Trenches, for it's actually FFMO which doesn't apply. It was a real joy reading new names in the winner bracket for all those tournaments. Looks like even Gary "The Kid" Fortenberry may be looking over his shoulder at the next generation gaining on him.

Best Regards,

Mark Nixon

*[Thanks for your letter. Your writing is, as always, entertaining. Thanks also for spreading good words about ASLUG. FORT]*

Dear Gary,

The reason that I'm writing you is concerning your 'zine ASLUG. In my correspondence with Mark Nixon, he wrote very highly of it and even said "This looks to be the 'zine we have been waiting for". So, with such a recommendation how can I go wrong?

I would like to know if there are any back issues available so that I can see for myself how good it is. Can you let me know the price for one—I'd like to get it soon!

I hope that you don't find this next section offensive, but I need to know something—Is ASLUG going to be around for awhile? I got burned by At The Point and don't want that to happen again....

Sincerely,

Joe Lepard

*[ASLUG has recently acquired ATP and I am currently working on the details of subscription fulfillment. The bonus to all of this is that ASLUG will expand its coverage to add ATP style articles and coverage of other than ASLUG scenarios. I still plan on working hand-in-hand with Rob Wolkey and FFE. We will share all articles submitted to either magazine in order to get them to the reader ASAP. FORT]*





## Designers Notes:

### ASLUG#9 - *Sword Play*

Mark Neukom

#### Introduction

*Sword Play* is another scenario designed specifically for the 1993 Gamex convention in Los Angeles. This scenario had its genesis as a tournament scenario for the May 1993 Gamex tournament in Los Angeles, California. My original thematic concept for that tournament was to have all the scenarios involving the American-built M3 Medium Tank. *Sword Play* was the first scenario of that group completed (of the others, *Beyond the Pakfronts* became ASLUG Scenario #1, the British North Africa scenario, *Disengagement Under Fire*, is in rough form [ED: and hopefully will be included in a future ASLUG], and the American Tunisian scenario was never started), and subsequently became the only one based on the original theme to be used in the tournament.

This scenario came from a page-long battle description from Bryan Perrett's *Tank Tracks to Rangoon*. Ever since I first read the book, I had been amazed by the sheer audacity displayed by the Japanese officer that attacked a mounted tank crew with his sword. For me, this one encounter encapsulated the Japanese approach to the war: through an act of desperation, this officer embarked on a course of action doomed to failure, and yet nearly carried off the event because he would not accept the fact that it couldn't work. The encounter was nicely suited as a scenario for the ASL system since it involved relatively small forces on each side that were engaged for a short period of time. Unfortunately, the one aspect of the fighting that made it stand out from other tank-infantry actions in Burma—the Japanese officer attacking a tank crew with his sword—was not something that could be undertaken using the normal ASL rules as they were written. In order to allow for such an unusual occurrence, a rather complicated Special Rule was required. While the Special Rule may seem daunting, it does a nice job of recreating this strange situation; additionally, it is optional, and need only be used at the whim of the Japanese player. While I was advised to drop this SSR from the scenario, I grew determined to keep it in since it provided much of the "color" for the scenario. Additionally, I have always felt that if an occurrence makes a situation unique, then every effort should be taken to enable that occurrence to happen.

#### SCENARIO HISTORY AND AFTERMATH

As is common with many scenario Histories, this one starts by looking at the larger picture and then shifts its focus down to the engagement depicted. When written in this manner the History should give the people playing the scenario a feel for the context of the battle they are fighting—especially why it was being fought. Like most of the History/Aftermath sections I write, with *Sword Play* I tried to provide the reader with a strong visual image of the events as they unfolded. This was possible in this case because of the excellent description provided by Perrett in his book; in some cases a History/Aftermath may need to be pieced together from several sources. I feel that another reason for great detail in the History/Aftermath is to provide the players with clues about how (or how not) to fight the situation. Some players may not want hints from their historical counterparts, but I for one do not mind learning from the experiences of others.

#### ORDERS OF BATTLE

One indication that a scenario has been prepared without the use of enough of the correct reference materials is the use of *Elements of XX Division* or *Elements of XX Army* in the OB description, and *Sword Play* is no exception. Understandably, the designer may not have access to the proper materials to identify the units involved down to the proper company (indeed, in many instances the "losing" side in a fight may have no way of recording the event for its own military history). This is not to say that a scenario should not be undertaken until both sides are represented in the reference material (if this were the case we would probably only have about 25% of the ASL scenarios we have), however, it is an encouragement to designers to exhaust all possible reference materials searching for more information before committing the situation to paper. In this instance, both the Japanese and British OBs suffer from this lack of information. Although the specific tank unit involved was identified by Perrett, the infantry formation that they were supporting on that day goes unrecorded, so the British OB bears the name of the *brigade* that fought in that area—not a very accurate way to identify the units involved.

#### Japanese

The Japanese force in this scenario is based largely on conjecture, and what would be required to provide a balanced situation in which the Japanese (as well as the British) would have roughly an even chance of a win. Only the presence of the 47mm anti-tank gun was dictated by Perrett's narrative, so the rest was up to me. As it turned out, however, the Japanese OB never changed, so apparently it had been measured very close to what was required. The force represents a reinforced platoon sized unit (or a reduced company, if you are a "half-empty" kind of person), beefed up with the addition of a HMG. The size of the force (i.e., four squads) was partially dictated by the British tank force engaged; I wanted the number of T-H Heroes available to be *less than* the number of tanks involved, in order to force the 47mm AT gun into action, as well as to encourage the use of SSR 4. Additionally, this size force required the Japanese to spread their forces thinly if all of the Victory areas were to be defended (or, alternatively, to not try to defend everything). The high number of leaders in the OB was required because of the need to possibly sacrifice one of them to create the Hero if the Japanese player chose to invoke SSR 4. The Japanese ELR is standard for this period of the war, taken directly from Chapter H. The relatively low SAN is an effort to encourage the British tanks to be CE (which, in turn, should also encourage the application of SSR 4).

#### British

The size of the British force was primarily dictated by the tournament situation that this scenario was designed for. Since AFVs were involved, the size of the force was limited to one AFV troop (U.S. platoon) and two platoons of infantry. The British OB changed only once after the tournament, when the high number of playings revealed that the Japanese had a slight edge in the scenario. One squad, LMG and 8-0 leader were added to the British OB in order to make the Japanese sweat the outcome a bit more, and therefore indirectly encourage them to use SSR4. The Carrier MMG A was included in the OB specifically to provide the SSR4-created Hero a target in case the Lee(a) tanks didn't take the "CE bait", but it also

provides the British with some much needed fire support considering their lack of "heavy" SW. The Carrier also serves as somewhat of a wild card, giving the British a mobile base of fire that can get into places uncomfortable for the Japanese without taking the same risks that they would if they were a tank. Like the Japanese, the British ELR is straight from Chapter H, and the low SAN reflects this side as the attacker (as well as limiting British sniper attacks on the already minuscule Japanese force). The entry area for the British was limited to the area south of the chaung so that the British would have to cross that obstacle in order to secure the Northern Plantation, possibly risking Bogs if his vehicles moved there.

#### VICTORY CONDITIONS

The original Victory Conditions were based solely on a ratio of squad equivalents on board at games end, and frankly didn't provide the Japanese with any reason to fight. This poor choice was replaced by victory based on control of several easily-defined multi-hex locations. Since the actual British objective in the battles to the west of Mandalay was to expand the Irrawaddy bridgehead, these Victory Conditions seemed more accurate as well. The opportunity for an automatic Japanese victory if they could amass  $\geq 23$  Casualty VP was an effort to get the Japanese to use every means at their disposal to destroy the Lee tanks, since in this way they could swiftly build up the Japanese CVP total.

#### HANDICAP PROVISIONS

Originally the Handicap Provisions were Balance Provisions, providing only one modification per side for balance (Japanese: add a DC to the Japanese OB; British: add 2 to the 37LL Canister Depletion # of all Lee tanks). When converted to ASLUG Scenario format, which uses the "Australian Scenario Handicapping" system, the Balance Provisions were converted to the base Handicap level (J1 and B1), and further modifications were added from there. If the scenario is played using the J3 or B3 Handicap levels, the "normal" balance of the scenario may [will] be altered considerably; in most cases it will not play the same as if the scenario is played without the Handicaps. [that's what they are intended to do.]

#### BOARDS/TERRAIN

I began the design of this scenario just after getting *Croix de Guerre*, and I was obviously influenced by my feelings about the boards in that module when it came time to choose the arena for *Sword Play*. The river on Board 40 was perfect for the sandy chaung that I had envisioned playing an important role in the scenario from my reading of Perrett. Additionally, there was a variety of cover and concealment available, important for the setting up of a Japanese defensive position with its hidden AT Gun and 10% Squad Equivalent HIP capability given by G1.631. Since parts of Burma are sparsely wooded, I decided to *not* invoke PTO terrain, allowing for a less dense configuration. However, I did specify several terrain types as being modified to their PTO-equivalents. The river was specified as being Dry, and therefore it was treated as a valley; however, due to the soft nature of the ground in the chaung, Sand (F.7) rules were instituted in the valley. The last change to the face of Board 40 came when I realized that hexes Y1,Z1,AA2, and BB1 were in fact *Elevated Road* hexes, and not sunken road hexes (much to my embarrassment, I figured this out as the tournament was in progress). I added a SSR to ensure that the



scenario would play as intended, since those hexes as an Elevated Road changed things considerably.

#### SPECIAL RULES

SSR 1 and 2 cover the standard EC/wind situation, as well as defining the changes to the terrain discussed in Board/Terrain above.

SSR3 concerns itself with the special situations regarding the British in this scenario. The use of Riders was not allowed, since the absence of the Bombay Grenadiers played such an important role in the ability of the berserk Japanese officer to attack the tank crew. (As the Bombay Grenadiers were specially trained to protect the tanks from close infantry attacks, especially while mounted on the tanks, a rule allowing them special abilities might have been used had they been involved in the fighting.) The use of Gyrostabilizers was allowed by one tank (note that the Gyrostabilizers are for both the 37LL MA and the B75 SA), since by this time of the war the use of this "gizmo" was probably more common. The interrogation of prisoners was also provided for. Lastly the printed ROF of the Lee tanks was raised by one if the vehicle was CE. This is another of the various "carrot and stick" ideas used to encourage the Japanese player to invoke SSR 4. In game terms, I do not have much trouble justifying this raising of the ROF, since observation from a CE vehicle was vastly superior to that from a BU vehicle, and this fact alone could account for a higher possible ROF—stemming directly from an ability to more swiftly find and service various targets. (I have always felt that the penalties for being BU in an AFV were quite lax in this game system, and that there should have been either more penalties for being BU, or more advantages from being CE.)

Lastly, SSR 4 provides for the strange occurrence of the Japanese officer attacking the exposed tank crew with his sword, effectively putting the tank out of action for the duration of the battle. Unfortunately, this is a long and complicated SSR, and I was urged by more than one person to leave it out, or possibly just allow the "extra" Japanese leader to convert himself into a T-H Hero at will. In the end, I compromised, and left the SSR in, but worded it so that it would be apparent that it was an *optional* SSR that could be invoked at the Japanese player's choice. I felt that the event was too important to the "flavor" of the engagement to leave out—or even to leave it to chance. In this respect there are many precedents for setting up special situations: the charge of the German leader in *Berserk!* (Deluxe ASL Scenario 2) and *Bread Factory #2* (Historical ASL Scenario RB3), and the banzai charges in *The Bushmasters* (ASL Scenario 66) and *First Banzai* (ASL Scenario A57) are several examples. Unfortunately, during the tournament play of this scenario, the Japanese had a slight advantage over the British and there was no need for them to use a leader for what appears to be a suicidal charge (in spite of all the incentives to do so). In this version of *Sword Play*, the British have a bit more of an edge, and the Japanese player may find towards the end of the game that the elimination of one more Lee may take away enough firepower to keep the British from winning—or, possibly, a captured Lee may give the Japanese enough points for the automatic win at game end. The SSR provides for all the possible occurrences if this method of attack is chosen, including the level of protection provided the Hero and the vehicle crew (dependent on how far along the fight is), as well as the ability of the 75mm SA of the Lee to continue firing while the fighting is going on in the turret. Overall, the Japanese player will probably only want to use this option if things aren't going well, but if the Hero can successfully tie-down a Lee for even one turn, it can be worth the effort. With only four and

a half game turns, the British must keep to a tight timetable, and keep their firepower intact.

#### WORD OF THANKS

This scenario was playtested by myself and John Knowles, and I owe John a considerable debt of gratitude for helping me to forge *Sword Play* into the scenario that it became, considering the troubles that plagued it when we started. Jim Millard and Gary Fortenberry also provided valuable suggestions for the scenario during its early stages. Thanks to all, because I couldn't have done it without you.

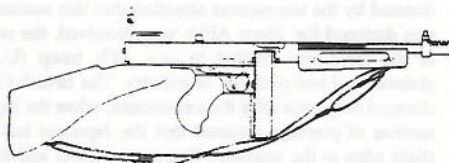
#### ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED FOR THIS SCENARIO

Perrett, Bryan. *Tank Tracks to Rangoon: The Story of British Armour in Burma*. London: Robert Hale Limited. 1978.

Perrett is one of Britain's eminent armor historians, and this work covers an often-ignored segment of that history. The role of armor in the China-Burma-India Theatre, unlike the role it played in Europe and North Africa (where armored machines were often called upon to do battle with other armored machines), was primarily to provide support for infantry in the attack—the very purpose for which the tank was introduced in the Great War. Perhaps it is this lack of tank vs. tank fighting that leaves the actions in Burma relegated to the dustbins of armor lore, but Perrett provides a very full and exciting account of the battles nonetheless. His finely detailed narrative style, mixed with the many first-hand accounts, provide much in the way of fodder for the scenario designer. The only disappointment of the book, from the scenario design aspect, is that it is told primarily from the Allied point-of-view, and therefore detailed information about various things Japanese in nature may be lacking (such as unit designations, the size of units involved, etc.). One word of warning: Perrett does *not* cover any aspects of the fighting in Burma that armored units were not involved in, so do not expect a comprehensive discussion of all the fighting in that area.

Perrett, Bryan. *The Lee/Grant Tanks in British Service*. Vanguard Series No. 6. Ed.: Martin Windrow. London: Osprey Publishing. 1978.

Another Perrett book, more than likely culled from the same sources used to write the above work. In spite of the repetition, this book is helpful in that it provides a look at the same subject from a slightly different angle, in that it is concerned only with the units equipped with the M# Lee tank, and concentrates on this vehicle in action. This series of books is intended to be heavily visual in nature, and therefore contains many photos of M3s in Burma (and elsewhere), along with color renderings of M3s in action, as well as unit badges, vehicle interiors, etc.



Thompson Caliber .45-inch Model 1928A1 Submachine gun. Calibre: .45-inch. Method of operation: delayed blowback, selective fire. Overall length: 33.75 inches. Barrel length: 10.5 inches. Feed system: 20- or 30-round staggered row detachable box magazine, or 50-round drum. Weight: 10.75 lbs. Muzzle velocity: 920 feet per second. Cycle rate of fire: 600 to 725 rounds per minute. Later models were produced without a compensator on the muzzle, simple L-type rear sight in place of the adjustable leaf sight and radial cooling fins on the barrel. The main drawback of the weapon was its complicated and precise manufacture, which resulted in the gun not being as sturdy as it might, and also in high cost.



#### Designers Notes:

### ASLUG 10 - Twilight's Last Gleaming

#### INTRODUCTION

This scenario had its genesis as a tournament scenario for the May 1993 Gamex convention in Los Angeles, California. As a way of showcasing the work that I had done on some vehicles not included in the game system, I decided to include one of my new vehicle counters in one of the scenarios that I used for this tournament. Because of the somewhat spectacular nature of the *Sturmiger* in terms of its (potential) firepower and protection, I chose that rare vehicle to be involved in the scenario that I designed. Since I had concrete information on only one engagement in which the *Sturmiger* participated, and I was loath to make up an ahistorical situation, the fighting for the town of Oberembt, Germany in February of 1945 was the only choice in the matter. Luckily, I had found several sources with information on the battle, and they provided the foundation for a very nice tournament-style scenario. Additionally, the new vehicle could play a role in the situation while not being a dominant piece of equipment (and therefore its loss would not mean the end of the game). So, with a nod to Richard Hill's "Motor Pool" article in the July 1993 issue of ASLUG, I present a scenario featuring a rare vehicle (production of the *Sturmiger* amounted to 18 vehicles)—complete with notes and counters for this vehicle new to the game system—in one of its few combat actions. I hope that everyone has as much fun with this scenario as I've had working on it.

#### SCENARIO HISTORY, AFTERMATH AND PHOTO

Unlike most of the Histories/Aftermath sections I write, these in *Twilight's Last Gleaming* provide only a minimal of tactical level detail. I generally prefer more information on the actual fighting that occurred for these History/Aftermath sections to be complete; however, as the sources that I used provided little in the way of specific details, I was left to write the History/Aftermath in the way I did (and I feel that this is much preferred to making up details). I believe that the information that is there provides a good background for the scenario, however, as well as providing some clues as to the unusual set-up limitations and the LV Hindrance. I specifically did not mention the *Sturmiger* in the History/Aftermath in order to not draw undue attention to it; at the time I wanted it to be accepted as a standard ASL unit.

I have included the scenario card photo in this section as a kind of historical side note. The vehicle depicted in the picture used on the scenario card is the actual *Sturmiger* captured in Oberembt by the troops of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. According to several sources, this was the first *Sturmiger* to be captured intact by the Western allies, and therefore it came to be somewhat of a "celebrity"; it is probably the single most photographed *Sturmiger* in the commonly available works on the subject. The vehicle was recovered by Sergeants Yarmosh, Mabry and Johnson of the 464<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Evacuation Company—which may possibly have been a British unit operating in the area, since one of the photos in Oberembt shows a Sherman AVR Mark I pulling v alongside the *Sturmiger*. What became of this



particular vehicle after the war is unknown; it is not the *Sturmtriger* that is in the Technical Defense Studies Collection in Kolenz, Germany (this vehicle was returned to Germany after spending many years at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland). A second *Sturmtriger* survives in the Kubinka Tank Museum outside Moscow, and is now also available for public viewing.

## ORDERS OF BATTLE

### German

The German force comprises of a scratch infantry company with supporting assets. Typically for this period of the war, the quality of the troops is quite low, and their ELR is one lower than the norm as per ASL Chapter H. This lower ELR can be attributed to the exhausted nature of the German units in the area, which had to deal with attacks both day and night. Additionally, the low ELR will contribute to a high number of German MMC winding up as prisoners, which is a nicely historic outcome. The low SAN reflects the generally unprepared nature of the German defenses. The troops, while identified as belonging to Volksgrenadier Division 363, could also belong to Panzer Divisions 9 or 11, as these Divisions were also unraveling in that area during the end of February, and the Americans of "Old Hickory" fought many battles against withdrawing (and counterattacking) Pz IVs and Panthers of these Divisions in and around the small hamlets near Oberembt. Additionally, there were Tiger Is in the town only four miles south and east of Oberembt, which were either part of an unnamed heavy tank battalion or, more likely, an ad hoc group formed from local training units (since most heavy tank battalions had been re-equipped with the Tiger IIs by then). As can be seen, there were many tank vs. tank clashes in the area at the time. The supporting Pz IVL is probably part of one of these divisions, and is mentioned in Hewitt as having been lost in the fighting. The presence of *sturmtriger* Kompanie 1002 (an Army asset) in Oberembt is unexplained; perhaps it was passing through the town in the general withdrawal. The single surviving vehicle of the company was captured after having its right track thrown (or shot off), and it had a rocket in its breech ready to fire.

### American

The attacking Americans are represented by a slightly under strength infantry company, provided with some powerful fire support as well as some transportation assets. The American troops are still relatively fresh after their crossing of the Roer River two days earlier, and their momentum in the attack is contributing to their ability to keep the Germans off balance. The armored support comes from the 743<sup>rd</sup> Tank Battalion, normally attached for the support of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division. The ELR is standard for the period for the Americans, and the low SAN reflects the bounding attack into an urban area. While there are several half-tracks in the OB (and Riders can be used with the tanks/tank destroyer), someone will end up walking in this advance. An M20 Armored Car is provided for scouting purposes. Since the room in the Special Rules section was going to run a bit tight, I added the note that the American vehicles could set up in Motion in the set up instructions. This modification was undertaken primarily to keep the Americans from losing a half-track to a "12" start roll at the beginning of the game. Of course, the American player will have to remember to place the appropriate "Motion" counters before commencing play.

## VICTORY CONDITIONS

The VCs are relatively simple in this scenario. Historically, the number of multi-hex buildings to be taken by the Americans possibly should have been seven instead of six, but the playtests revealed that in attempting to get all seven multi-hex buildings the Americans tended to get reckless and the Germans were able to surpass their automatic CVP total for the win. The provision for the automatic German win is intended to represent the momentum that the Americans had at this point in the fighting; with casualties relatively light, morale remained high and the troops could be pushed farther than under heavy casualty conditions. Therefore, if the Germans can inflict enough casualties on the Americans, they presumably will slow the American advance through friction on the American units—something the Germans weren't able to do.

## HANDICAP PROVISIONS

In this ASLUG version of *Twilight's Last Gleaming* the "Australian Handicapping" system has been used. I think they are a little lumpy in that they aren't exactly even in their trade-offs, but they will do the job of providing a gradient of advantage to one side or the other. Play of the scenario using one of the third level handicaps would probably change the style of play used considerably.

## BOARDS/TERRAIN

Board 10 was chosen for this battleground due to its small hamlet-like village on one half of the board. This village was small enough to allow it to be cleared by a superior force within the time allotted, without any spillover effect into areas not important to the battle. Additionally, it also provided a non-urban avenue of approach for the attacker, allowing both forces to be set-up onboard. This cut down on set-up time, and did away with several Scenario Defender advantages that weren't desired for the German force anyway. The rowhouses were modified in order to provide a quantity of multi-hex buildings.

## SPECIAL RULES

The usual EC and terrain modifications are covered in SSR 1. The rowhouses were changed as noted in the Boards/terrain section above. As is normal for many scenarios, Kindling fires is NA, although it probably wouldn't do either player much good anyway, since the game is so short and the Germans are limited in their set up area. Since the scenario occurs late in the war, the Pz IVJ was allowed to carry Schuerzen by SSR 4. This was done to provide a small amount of further protection from the many bazookas available to the Americans.

As the scenario name implies, the fighting in Oberembt takes place during the waning light of day, and therefore the sliding Twilight LV Hindrance is in effect. This Hindrance drn is intended to recreate the gathering darkness. Like many of the weather related LV Hindrances, this one can be hard to remember to apply; the advantage is that you will always know exactly what it will be each turn.

The limitations imposed upon the German force due to their lack of readiness (as well as their preparing to repel an attack from the wrong direction) are covered in SSR 3. This SSR is probably the most complicated aspect of this scenario, and generally it will take the German some time to work out a legal set up that is also suitable to the needs at hand. Under the restrictions of SSR 3, however, the German will be hard pressed to describe any set up as "suitable". The

intent here is to show the defenders in preparation on their positions; hence, they do not enjoy the advantages generally given the defender, and they are generally not in a position to respond quickly to the emergency that develops. The facing of many units is dictated to the German, and where the heavy weapons may be placed is limited by the fact that they must have a clear LOS off the West board edge. Stacking units is not allowed, and only two squad-equivalents may set up in buildings—the most natural hard cover in this situation. As the final insult, no German unit can be concealed during the first player turn (originally this was the first turn, but it was changed to allow German units to gain concealment going into turn 2). Due to these numerous limitations on set-up, the German will need to study the board situation carefully during set up. Planning secondary defensive positions at the start of this scenario is a must for the German if they hope to hold off the Americans. Finally, the last sentence of SSR 4 should not be ignored or forgotten; the opportunity to entrench in the right positions can be crucial to the German defense. The protection afforded units in entrenchments allowed the German force to emerge victorious in several playtest games.

## WORDS OF THANKS

Thanks are due to Jim Millard, David McCarthy, Pat Burrows and especially John Knowles for their help in playtesting this scenario. Unfortunately, several other people also participated in the playtest of *Twilight's Last Gleaming* (through Jim Millard and Gary Fortenberry), but their names pass unknown to me. Nevertheless, their suggestions too helped to shape this scenario, and I am greatly appreciative of the help provided by all of them.

## ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED FOR THIS SCENARIO

Gudgin, Peter. *The Tiger Tanks*.

London: Arms and Armour Press. 1991.

Gudgin's book (like Schneider's, see below) provides very little specific information about the Oberembt fighting, but the *Sturmtriger* company engaged can be gleaned from the descriptions in these two books on the whereabouts of the various companies on given dates. This book was more helpful in the preparation of the *Sturmtriger* Vehicle Notes.

Hewitt, Robert L. *Workhorse of the Western Front*:

*The Story of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division*.

Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press.

1946.

This book provided the foundation upon which *Twilight's Last Gleaming* was based. Hewitt provides a tactical level retelling of the path taken by the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's march across Europe. Obviously, a work on this scale abounds with scenario material, and in most cases at least the American units involved can be easily identified. This book is very highly recommended to scenario designers.

MacDonald, Charles B. *The Last Offensive*.

Series: United States Army in World War II; The European Theatre of Operations.

Washington, D.C.: 1990.

This is the last in the series of the U.S. Army's official histories of the Second World War in the European Theatre, and anyone familiar with MacDonald's other works will recognize his thorough hand. Like the Whitaker's book, MacDonald picks up the war at the beginning of 1945; unlike the Whitaker's, his work does not finish until the end of the war. Due to the scope of the book, the narrative tends



to be operational in nature; however, MacDonald does discuss many events from a tactical perspective. In fact, the fighting at Oberembt is discussed in one paragraph, and MacDonald even mentions the capture of a "Nebelwerfer (sic) company that never got the chance to fire", a mis-identified reference to the presence of *sturmörser* Kompanie 1002. MacDonald also mentions the confusion caused by the Americans in their decision to continue attacking at night as well as in daylight, keeping the Germans off balance and in a state of near-exhaustion. This information provided important clues as to the state of the German force in this scenario. Obviously, the book provides a wealth of background information for scenarios set in the period, and it is an excellent starting place for further research. Like all of the books in this series, the maps are excellent.

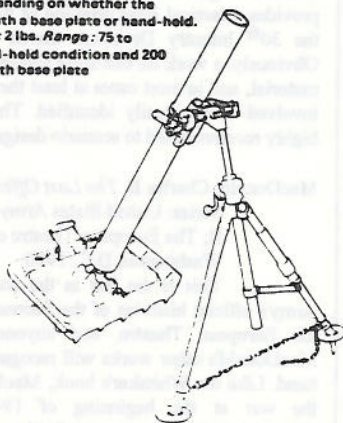
Schneider, Wolfgang. *Elefant, Jagdtiger, Sturmtrüger: Rarities of the Tiger Family*. Trans.: Dr. Edward Force. West Chester, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd. 1990.

Akin to the Gudgin book in that it is more concerned with the *Sturmtrüger's* technical description than in the battles fought in (primarily due to a lack of information about the latter), this work does contain the most complete set of photos of the Oberembt vehicle that I have ever found in one place. This series is primarily visually oriented, but this volume does have a very nice textual description of the vehicle.

Whitaker, W. Denis & Shelagh. *Rhineland: The Battle to End the War*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1989.

The Whitaker's book really provided background information for this scenario, giving a good overview of the events leading up to this battle, as well as the things that occurred afterwards. Also helpful is that *Rhineland* is presented from the German point of view in addition to the Allied (albeit at a smaller volume). Some of the events are covered in considerable detail, while others are given only a cursory look; this is probably to be expected from a book that looks into the first three months of 1945 along the entire Western Front. The book has a nice Allied "Order of Battle" section at the rear, covering the various operations that encompassed the Rhine battles; unfortunately, there is no similar compilation for the German forces engaged (perhaps the units involved were too fragmented by that time to include in any comprehensive OB). Lastly, there is a very good set of 13 maps, several of which are tactical in scale. I would recommend this book to other scenario designers, as there are many situations to be mined here.

The US 60mm Mortar. Weight: between 20 and 43 lbs depending on whether the mortar is used with a base plate or hand-held. Weight of bomb: 2 lbs. Range: 75 to 784 yards in hand-held condition and 200 to 1,985 yards with base plate



## SOVIET MOTOR POOL

The Russian 5/8" counters arrived on three counter sheets amounting to a little over two full sheets of AFVs/Guns in *Beyond Valor*. Four more counters appear in *Code of Bushido*, these being the T34 M43.

Only one model AFV in the Soviet AFV OB is on a captured chassis, the Su 76i (g), and only one representative of the thousands of AFVs supplied to Bloody Joe from his 'Allies', the M476 (a). These two are the only AFVs of foreign manufacture that come in Russian mud brown. In one scenario we have to use British Stuart III(a)s to represent some of these machines "lent" to the Motherland.

With the Russians we don't find the neat variety of the German counter mix, because the Russians designed a tank that would do the job they expected of it and did not play around with it much, just produced it as fast as they could.

Out of the forty-six AFVs in counter form, sixteen have not yet been bloodied on THAGC ASL battlefields.

unit	# of scenarios	total in play
T40	1	1
T70	3	10
T26 M33	1	6
T26 M37/39	4	6
B5-5 M34	2	3
BT-7 M37	1	6
BT-7 A	2	2
T28 M34	1	6
T34 M40	4	5
T34 M41	3	10
OT34	3	1
T34 M43	6	10
T43	1	6
T34/85	7	4
KV1 M39/40	1	3
KV-1 M41	2	6
KV-1 M42	2	6
KV-2	2	1
KV-1S	2	6
IS-2	2	1
IS-2m	2	3
Su-76m	1	4
Su-122	1	4
Su-152	1	2
ISU-122	2	6
ISU-152	1	1
Su-85	1	2
BA-20	1	4
BA-6	3	5

The Russian truck fleet of wheeled transport and anti-aircraft vehicles has nine types only three of which are included in scenarios.

IAG-10-AA	1	1
GAZ-67B	1	1
ZIS-S	3	2

The last of the 5/8" counters are our Russian Artillery park. Twenty-six weapons are included, with ten seeing active service.

MTR		
82mm	4	2
ATG		
47L	4	2
45LL	5	3
57LL	5	2
INF		
37°	1	1
76°	5	1
ART		
76°	1	1
76	1	2
76L	4	3

AA  
37L

1

1

For the Russian 1/2" counter SW you'll need to have at least these amounts to play any THAGC scenario.

LMG	12
MMG	7
HMG	5
.50 cal	2
50mm MTR	3
ATR	6
FT	2
DC	4
MOL prod.	3

Next month check out the "Green Machine", the U.S. Army/USMC OB.

Richard Hill

## SCENARIO ANALYSIS: *Sword Play*

This scenario forces tough decisions on both players. The small number of defenders and the need to cover the victory areas adequately makes the Japanese job a delicate balancing act. Both players will feel he has fought a squeaker to the end, and a win in this scenario is one the victor will earn.

### SET UP (Defense)

The playing area is very small, but has some interesting features that a cunning defender will need to use to his every advantage. When first examining the layout, you should be aware that Bore Sighting is allowed and situate your Bore Sighting weapons (47L AT Gun, HMG, 50mm Mtr) in dominating positions. Due to the sand in the Chaung, the British player will be leery of using his AFVs to assault the Northern Plantation. Use of this knowledge will allow you to set up very little in AT defenses for this victory area. I do not advocate leaving the Northern Plantation stripped of all defenders, but a very small of portion of the overall Japanese force pool should be dispatched to cover this area. An HIP squad could give a small detachment of British infantry tasked with securing this area a very tough time, and may just hold onto the area long enough to disrupt the British player's focus. Having said this, I believe the Southern plantation should be held at almost all costs. The hill is behind any Japanese defenders of the Southern plantation and if the Brits capture the level one hill the Southern plantation position has become untenable in any case. The Foxholes allow Japanese defenders to hide from non-adjacent British through the use of B9.21. This could allow sturdy Japanese defenders to hold the Plantations from British assaults by firing at ADJACENT targets with PBF or with MGs providing covering fire from overlooking positions. To prevent the Brit AFVs from charging into your hex and locking-up your fire, consider setting-up one of your four allowed T-H Heroes with each of these locations.

The 50mm Mortar should be positioned to fire on British Infantry as they move through the southern woods. The airburst modifier is a real killer. This light mortar can also attack the Carrier with a reasonable chance of success. On an effects DR of "5" or less the Carrier will be effected (shocked or immobilized). While this mortar is nasty vs the Carrier or Infantry, it will have negligible effect vs. the L<sub>4</sub> tanks. These armored gun platforms are what keep the Brit in this game, he will have to use them



aggressively and this is where a Japanese player must look for his chance. The 47L AT Gun has very little chance of killing a Lee from the front, but the small playing area and narrow axis of advance will give you ample opportunity to try for immobilization shots, and if you are very tricky and patient you may be able to situate the Gun to try for a side or rear shot. Be careful that you don't leave the Gun in an exposed position that the British infantry can sweep before exposing his AFV's tender flanks to that particular location.

The sunken road may be a trap for a Japanese defender drawn to its protective embrace. This position, while easily made into an almost impregnable position, has no bearing on the Victory Conditions.

Two last warnings for the Japanese, don't set up too far forward. A good British player will be able to cut you off from the really important Victory Areas and cruise to an easy victory. You must make the Brits pay in blood for the *Victory Areas* not try to fight him for the entire board. Also, the British 37LL canister is deadly, don't underestimate its effectiveness. This scenario has such small unit density a single good shot of canister could wipe out half of a careless Japanese player's infantry.

Some rules that the Japanese needs to pay particular attention to for this scenario are:

G.4 - Kunai is the only terrain in this scenario that will aid the Japanese player via this rule.

G1.422 - All T-H Heroes may be set up on board HIP. G1.6121 - This rule will only come into effect via application of the B1 handicap. A Set AT DC can be devastating to the British chances. If the Brits give you a DC you might also consider using a DC Hero.

G1.631 - The Japanese may set up 10% of their *squad* equivalents HIP. This allows one squad equivalent in addition to the AT Gun and crew and all four T-H Heroes to set up HIP, that's quite a bit of uncertainty that the Brit will be forced to deal with.

#### ASSAULT

While 4.5 turns may look short, you have only a short distance to go and nearly overwhelming firepower. The half turn will prevent the Japanese player from running one of those unbreakable squads into a victory location to snatch a win from you. You will have the last opportunity to move/advance, so use it to your advantage. Leave the Japanese defenders stretched-out defending the Northern Plantation by smashing into the Southern Plantation with the goal of taking it by turn three or four and grabbing the hill not the last turn. You must use some of your infantry in the early game to move through and search out all locations where the AT Gun could pop up and nail a Lee with a side/rear shot. This will have the added benefit of also screening out HIP T-H Hero positions.

The Japanese Infantry is extremely difficult to assault, but this willingness to stand up to fire results in a brittleness that could, after a couple of turns of pounding, leave very little infantry defending the Victory Areas.

The 9-2 leader is one of the most important units in the scenario for the British (the AFVs are the most important units in the game for both sides). His coupling with the MMG from the Carrier could really hammer the Japanese positions due to the relatively light cover in the victory areas of the Southern Plantation. The s7# of the 51mm Mtr can be most important to aiding the assault move forward under cover.

Carriers have a few unique features that a player unfamiliar with them will often overlook. All of these features are important to the Brits in this scenario and should be looked at carefully. Rule D6.82 tells us that the inherent crew of a Carrier is a 2-4-7 HS.

D6.631 let's us know that we may remove the BMG as a MMG. This particular Carrier also has a sD5 as well as vehicular Smoke Grenades F.10. Losing this nifty little vehicle will hurt much more than its CVP loss.

The Lee tanks are tough enough in situations such as this, but upping their ROF while CE makes them extremely deadly. As the Brit tanker I would take the chance of SSR 4 and the threat of attack by T-H Heroes to double my ROF with the 75 and can you imagine what that canister will do with a ROF of two? (Check out British Vehicle Note C. It raises the C5 printed on the backs of the Lees to a C8.) The low Japanese SAN will not deter me from opening up my tanks hatches. I may lose a tank to recall, but a recalled vehicle does not count towards CVP totals.

One last note for the Brit; do not forget about Interrogation. It can yield up some very helpful benefits.

#### SSR 4

I think SSR 4 adds flavor to the scenario without taking away too much playability. It can make for a few tense moments in a close fought game. However, I only play this rule for fun. I would never play it in a tournament situation. It can distract from play of a tight scenario and very few people wish to make a tournament scenario more difficult to keep on top of with special rules of this size.

So, play SSR 4 only if *both* players wish, but above all enjoy yourself and don't discard this scenario because of the SSR. *Sword Play* has a lot to offer for a tournament sized scenario and these sized scenarios are difficult to find.

### TOURNAMENT NEWS

Reporting ASL tournaments to its readers is the main purpose of ASLUG. Any tournament news will be printed. Tournament Directors are encouraged to send in their tournament news as earlier as possible.

(\*) Denotes ASL tournaments which the Editor has personally attended and recommends highly.

#### ASL OKTOBERFEST 1993

Columbus Day Weekend - Cleveland, OH

Contact:

Bill Conner

P.O. Box 4114

Youngstown, OH 44515-0114

1-(216) 797 9009

In addition to the regular ASLUG prizes/tournaments, the player with the most wins at ASLUG scenarios will receive *every* ASL module in print at the time of ASLUG '93. This includes the ASLRB and ANNUALS. If KGP is out it will also be awarded.

#### ASL at GENCON '93

Milwaukee, WI

August 20

For More Information contact:

David Dally

901 Oeffling DR.

McHenry, IL

(708) 497 9033

#### 1994 ASL Open

January 21-23, 1994

Irving, TX

The '93 ASL Open, which has been called "The final jewel in the ASL triple crown", was a huge success by any standards. This year we have moved

the site closer to D/FW airport and to a hotel with more affordable rates. Bob McNamara will also attend as a special guest, we may yet talk him into playing.

Irving is the home of the World Champion Dallas Cowboys football team and borders D/FW airport on the South and East. The new hotel facilities are top notch and are within walking distance of many fast food franchises (there is a McDonald's just across the street). The hotel provides *free* transportation to and from D/FW. For room reservations call:

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The same large cash prizes to the top finishers will be paid according to the revised schedule as follows; 1st \$400, 2nd \$300, 3rd \$200, 4th \$100. The format will be an AREA seeded modified Swiss style tournament. Try to make it if you can, we have other events planned and I will elaborate later.

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In addition to ASL there will be several RP and boardgaming events.

## DOES IT HAVE THE STURMTIGER?

Mark Neukom

In 1979, I was a young soldier in the U.S. Army in Germany, and I was searching for face-to-face opponents for my favorite game, *Squad Leader*, and its very detailed expansion module *Cross of Iron*. Since *COI* had expanded the AFV aspect of the game system far beyond anything I had seen previously, I decided that this was the strongest selling point of the game as far as new players were concerned. I approached one of my gaming buddies, Walter Henry Gillespie, and asked if he would like to try the game since "it had every German and Russian World War II AFV anyone could imagine". Henry (he demanded to be called Henry) responded "Does it have the *Sturmiger*?" His question surprised me somewhat, both for his choice of vehicles to ask about as well as for the speed at which it followed my statement. Fully aware that *COI* did not have the *Sturmiger* (and several other rare Eastern Front AFVs), I had to admit



to Henry that "the *Sturmiger* was one of the few vehicles not represented", but that the vehicles that it had were covered in such detail as to hold one in great awe. Henry remained unimpressed, and we never played the *Squad Leader* game system.

### It Does Now.

Fourteen years have passed since those heady early days of the game system. I haven't seen nor spoken to Henry since 1981, but his question has lingered on. Except now I can answer it in the affirmative. Yes, Henry, there is a *Sturmiger* for the ASL system, brought to it by my hand, and I did it for you, where ever you may be.

### German Vehicle Note 101: 38cm *Sturmörser* *Sturmiger*

Several unusual choices have been made in bringing this rare vehicle to the ASL system. While all other "Rocket" armament weapons have been removed from the system (aside from the generic application of rocket armament for aircraft and OBA), I decided that this weapon was a legitimate ASL unit—in spite of its ability to fire indirectly—due to the German intention to use it in the rôle of a heavy direct fire assault gun. Indeed, it was for this very reason that the *Sturmiger* carried the heavy armor that it did: if it had been intended as a stand-off weapon there would have been no need for heavy frontal armor or even the closed top.

Secondly, the MA, while in actuality a 380mm weapon, is rated at only 300mm on the counter. This downgrading of the weapon size was undertaken for the same reasons that the Churchill AVRE (British Vehicle Note 37) went from 290mm down to 200mm on the counter. These large caliber weapons with an inherent inaccuracy have had their MA caliber size rounded down to offset their lethality given their chances of obtaining a "hit" against an Infantry-type target, as well as to tone down their effects against terrain<sup>1</sup>.

Thirdly, there were several characteristics about the *Sturmiger's* MA that required special handling. With its ability to destroy fortifications in similar fashion to the Churchill AVRE, the rules from that vehicle were used for cases when the *Sturmiger* fired against mines, pillboxes and walls/hedges. The inherent inaccuracy of the MA was handled somewhat like a \* Gun, but with the chances of hitting the target dropping even more with range. Also covered were the ability of the weapon to use Spotted Fire, the invocation of Heavy Payload, and the inherent poor quality of the 38cm projectile which will cause a much higher than average dud rate. Additionally, the troubles involved in moving around a 700 pound projectile were addressed, both in the modifications to the way a *Sturmiger's* possible Ammo Vehicle would be used, and the inability of the *Sturmiger* to use Intensive Fire or even to fire during the DFPh<sup>2</sup>.

Lastly, some people may be somewhat confused by the *Sturmiger's* Armor Factors. The "2" exponent on the boxed frontal AF indicates that the turret/upper-superstructure AF is raised by two factor steps rather than the usual one. However, as denoted by the Vehicle Note, in this case the turret/upper-superstructure AF is raised to "22" instead of "26". The use of the AF "22" is required since "18" is far too low to recreate the *Sturmiger's* resistance to fire, while "26" greatly exaggerates its level of protection<sup>3</sup>. Some may notice that I raised the lower hull AF to "14" from "11"—this was done because a few *Sturmiger's* were modified with an additional piece of armor bolted on to the lower hull front. Maybe I should have done

this as an optional AF for the second counter, with a RF of 1.2; however, I ran out of room on the Vehicle Note sheet and left it out. Perhaps if Avalon Hill decides to do this counter they will do it that way...

The main disadvantage of incorporating rare vehicles into the ASL system comes in finding suitable material on which to build a scenario. While there has been some information published on the whereabouts of the three *Sturmörser* companies during given periods, details about individual actions are quite sparse. Therefore, beyond putting a *Sturmiger* into a scenario because it fits into the time frame, it is quite difficult to construct historically accurate scenarios that use this vehicle. In the case of the accompanying scenario, *Twilight's Last Gleaming*, I was able to "reverse engineer" the scenario by looking in published accounts from the Allied point of view concerning battles that I knew the *Sturmiger* was involved in. Probably the most-photographed *Sturmiger* was the vehicle depicted on the scenario card—the same vehicle that was captured at Oberembt during Operation GRENADE. I had remembered a source naming the location where the photos were taken as being the town of Elsdorf, a city taken with the aid of the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division in late February of 1945<sup>4</sup>. Examination of unit histories of the units on either side of the 3<sup>rd</sup> A.Div. produced a reference to the capture of a *Sturmiger* in Oberembt, 4 miles northwest of Elsdorf, by the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, as well as providing details concerning the events leading up to the capture of the town. With this information I was able to include the *Sturmiger* in an actual combat setting through the use of a historically accurate scenario.

I used several sources when working up the *Sturmiger* for ASL, some of them better than others:

Anon. *Der Sturm-Tiger mit 38-cm-Raketenwerfer RW 61. Waffen revue*. No. 35, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 1979. Schwäbisch Hall, Germany: Journal Verlag Schwend, GmbH. 1979

Unfortunately in German, this article discusses many of the technical aspects of the *Sturmiger*, especially concerning the Raketenwerfer and its ammunition, with photos from the technical manual on the vehicle, as well as several previously unseen photos of the oberembt vehicle. This article also refutes assertions that the *Sturmiger* was used against the Warsaw Uprising in the late summer of 1944 by reprinting the Army acceptance dates of all 18 vehicles produced.

Auerbach, William. *Last of the Panzers: German Tanks 1944-1945*. Tanks Illustrated No. 9. London: arms and Armour Press. 1984.

Basically a picture book, Auerbach's coverage of the *Sturmiger* consists of only two photos of the Oberembt vehicle, but he does discuss the various problems with the 38cm projectile. This book is good for scenario designers wanting to incorporate certain vehicles into their situations, since quite often the date and location of the photos are included.

Chamberlain, Peter and Doyle, Hilary L. Technical Editor: Thomas L. Jentz. *Encyclopedia of German Tanks of World War Two*. New York: Arco Publishing Company, Inc. 1978.

Probably the most complete coverage to be found on German WWII armor in one volume, this work is flawed for purposes of creating ASL-style vehicles only in that it does not include figures on

ground pressure. For the more rare vehicles, this book may provide more information on combat service than can be found anywhere else (which might not be saying much).

Gudgin, Peter. *The Tiger Tanks*. London: Arms and Armour Press. 1991.

Gudgin covers the *Sturmiger* both from its technical side as well as going into some detail about their combat service. Unfortunately, the latter information appears to be based heavily on the Egon Kleine and Wolfgang Schneider accounts, and therefore does not add much beyond offering clues about where else to look for scenario material. Aside from the *Sturmiger* situation, this is an excellent book on the Tiger tanks for scenario designers, with the early days in Russia and Tunisia well covered.

Kleine, Egon and Kühn, Volkmar. *Tiger: The History of a Legendary Weapon 1942-45*. Trans. David Johnston. Winnipeg: J.J. Fedorowicz Publishing. 1989.

Excellent fodder for scenario designers (ASL scenario G14: *Tiger*, *Tiger* is lifted right out of this book), this work covers the Tiger tanks in action on all fronts, as told by the crews that manned them. The only criticism of this book (from a scenario designer's point of view) would be that it is told from such a personal level as to make it hard to see what was occurring outside the tank the narrator is in. The amount of detail found here about *Sturmigers* in combat is more than nearly anywhere else (this and Schneider's work appear to be based on the same sources), but it is still scant.

Pallud, Jean Paul. *Battle of the Bulge: Then and Now*. London: Battle of Britain Prints International Limited. 1989 (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.).

This is a surprising book from the scenario designers perspective. At first glance it would appear to be a gold mine, but once work is started on a situation you discover that, as with any other source, you have to look elsewhere to get both sides of the story. The reason for this is that pallud tells primarily the German side of the story, and he attempts to cover all of the operational aspects of the campaign. Unfortunately, many of the tactical details get lost. A good example are the two *Sturmörser* companies assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Army: the last time that they are mentioned it states that they "were already assigned to 6. Panzer-Armee on December 16." So they were available for deployment on the northern shoulder of the "Bulge", but any further details we are left only to guess at. Can anyone else provide details of *Sturmigers* in the Ardennes?

Schneider, Wolfgang. *Elefant, Jagdtiger, Sturmiger: Rarities of the Tiger Family*. Trans. Dr. Edward Force. West Chester, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd. 1990.

Originally a German work, this covers the *Sturmiger* from the technical aspect, as well as providing the same "in action" details as the Kleine work. Numerous photos show the subject inside and out, and a good three view drawing is also provided.

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, I am assuming that this is the reason that Avalon Hill dropped 90mm from the MA caliber size of the Churchill AVRE. While it is the only reason that I could come up with that made sense for doing this (and it is the reasoning I used in deciding to lower the *Sturmiger's* MA caliber size by 80mm), only a confirmation from Bob McNamara would bring out the true reasoning.



<sup>2</sup> While one source mentioned that it took 10 minutes to reload the *Sturmiger* MA after firing, I decided that limiting it to firing only in the PFP is enough. That limitation, coupled with the Low Ammo B# would ensure that any warping of the time frame of an ASL scenario would not be too great. Additionally, a good opponent would probably not give a *Sturmiger* more than one or two shots anyway.

<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the inclusion of the "22" AF for the *Sturmiger* prepares the way for the new AF needed when the *Modern ASL* project is launched; an AF of "22" will be used with many of the modern AFVs, and it will even out the "lump" in the Armor Factors as they appear currently (the Armor Factors will go up by "4" after "14" is reached: 14, 18, 22, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42...)

<sup>4</sup> Elsdorf is where the U.S. "Heavy" Tank T-26E3 (later renamed M26 Pershing) was first used in combat, within two days of the time frame of this scenario. See SL Series 300 Scenario #300 (*Trial By Combat*).

## TACTICAL BRIEFS

This column is devoted to do and don't hints. Contributors will be promoted at the rate of 1 rank per 5 printed hints. Once a contributor reaches 5-Star General ranking he will receive a ★★★★★ Star General ASLUG T-Shirt and ASLUG Magazine gratis, for life. Of course, every submission will be screened for relative worthiness, as you rise in rank your submissions will be culled more thoroughly.

When using Cavalry, Japanese (w/ Banzai), Russians (w/ Human Wave), or Chinese (W/ Dare-Death Squads), be alert for opportunities to run your troops into hexes occupied by broken enemy units. This gives you TPBF instead of just PB, and the fact that you'll be Lax won't matter as the surviving enemy will be forced to Rout. [Ed: this also works great if you can charge a unit that will be forced to use FPF when you enter its location, possibly breaking themselves for you.]

- Pvt. Mark Hatfield

Fortified buildings are good for more than just a +1 TEM, especially in scenarios where the Defender has Guns. Many Guns can be set up on upper levels of Fortified Buildings, very handy for getting a good Field of Fire.

- Pvt. Mark Hatfield

Be aware of U.S. Vehicle Multi-Applicable Note R. This note applies to any U.S. Vehicle with a white-background ROF. It allows the vehicle's MA the possibility of Multiple Hite (even if > 40mm). It also halves the firer-based TH DRM (FRD and prior to modification for Acquisition) for Gun Duel purposes. These are very significant boosts for several U.S. vehicles, and you can be sure that scenario designers take them into account.

- Pvt. Mark Hatfield

Don't underestimate the ability to leave DM on units after trying to rally them, especially if you have a lot of broken, leaderless squads. You only get one MMC Self-Rally anyway, and leaving them DM allows them to rout further, possibly to a leader.

[Ed: Once a routing unit ends a Rally phase in a Woods/Building/Pillbox/Trench he no longer has the option to remain DM (unless overstacked in a Woods/Building).]

- Pvt. Mark Hatfield

As the Scenario Defender in a night scenario, you'll want to illuminate the enemy as quickly as possible to slow their movement and trap them in illuminated locations. With this in mind consider sacrificing your worst leader by setting him up HIP well out in front of your defense with the purpose of trying for a starshell as soon as the enemy surrounds him. You can use method 1 to place the Starshell, which is the most accurate method of placement, and have plenty of nicely illuminated targets in DFPH for your main defending force. Furthermore, you won't lose concealment when shooting, since you'll be outside the illuminated location (except, of course, the hapless bloke who fired the starshell).

- Pvt. Mark Hatfield

If an overwhelming enemy force advances into CC with you, and you somehow manage to Ambush them, don't think that the only advantage you've gained is a +1/-1 DRM that won't save you anyway. As the Ambusher, you can decline CC altogether and Withdraw into an accessible hex and move away in your MPh (or maybe give the enemy stack a nasty surprise with your PB Prep Fire).

[Ed: in this same situation if the Ambushee has a (-) DRM leader involved in the CC you might consider attacking him and his accompanying MMC alone. If you get a 9-2 leader and Squad/HS for the sacrifice of a Squad/HS consider yourself the victor. Who knows, without the (-) DRM of the now dead leader the enemy may not be able to muster up an attack on you with any great chance of success.]

Similarly, as an Ambushing Attacker, you may want to destroy the enemy in CC if possible but not be tied down in Melee (that the enemy can easily reinforce). No Problem. After both sides have made their attacks you can decline melee and withdraw into an accessible location.

[Ed: This method of withdrawal allows your guys to move through the enemy, effectively 'infiltrating' their forward positions. If you choose to not attack and immediately withdraw you will remain concealed and could really throw a wrench into the enemy plans. You could also withdraw to that victory hex the enemy has surrounded to prevent you from reaching in the MPh/APH of the last game turn. Just a few thoughts on Ambush.]

[Hey! Mark gets promoted his first time out. Good Job Soldier!]

- Pfc. Mark Hatfield

The New Errata [Ed: Not Errata, but Q&A. There is a difference, one changes the game the other clarifies a rule.] in the 1993a ANNUAL allows your Dummy counters to multiply so that if you begin a scenario with them all stacked, you will be able to split-off all but two, each individual one of which gains its own concealment counter as it leaves the stack. Thus, you can end your first MPh with two less than double the "at-start" number of Dummy counters on the OB. [Ed: Only the counters below the top concealment counter of each stack are "Dummy" counters. All the rest are concealment counters, so in reality you still have only one less than the number of OB given Dummy counters no matter how you start them and split.]

Using the "Dummy Generation" tactic [Ed: Actually "Dummy Deploy" Tactic is more accurate.], start a scenario with a stack of seven Dummy counters close to your 9-2 directing the HMG in a 2nd level location. In your first MPh five of these split-off, growing a concealment apiece as they go, and the 9-2 stack will soon be surrounded by six stacks of Dummy sniper absorbers. Notice that if you can position such a Dummy stack in an adjacent location with a TEM < the 9-2's location, the enemy Sniper will have to select the location with the lowest TEM, when not landing directly on the 9-2's location, thus allowing you to protect your 9-2 with as few as two Dummy counters. In both cases, the Sniper will have to land directly on the 9-2's location to harm him, at least on the first sniper attack.

- Pvt. Mark Nixon

Using the 93a ANNUAL clarification of the height of Smoke, it is no longer helpful to land Smoke at ground level to screen a 2nd level 9-2 HMG position (for example). The correct tactic is to land the Smoke in the hex in front of the enemy position, which requires the Smoke-firing weapon to move for position to hit such a hex, most likely at ground level since there won't be a second level blocking the view of the enemy position and allowing you to target from afar. Smoke in this hex will force the enemy fore to trace LOS down through the Smoke to hit your units at levels below second level.

- Pvt. Mark Nixon

Are your tanks facing a lot of enemy Guns with Multiple Hit (MH) potential? There is a way to totally foil MH's. Get your AFV's HD and you won't suffer a single MH. This is because all MH's are generated only on Hull Hits (double DR), which will be a miss vs a HD target. Even though a roll of 'Eyes' can score a CH vs a HD target, a MH does not apply to a CH. In the same vein, the enemy cannot try for rDeliberate Immobilization when you are HD, for they cannot score a Hull Hit.

- Pvt. Mark Nixon

Playing at night with your big FP out of NVR and no illumination on the enemy you want to pound, mark your boys with Opportunity Fire, drive a vehicle through the enemy hex and Bounding Fire on them in the Hex. This leaves a Gunflash counter in their hex, and in Advancing Fire Phase your Opportunity Firers will be able to fire at the enemy in that Gunflash location.

- Pvt. Mark Nixon

When entering CC and you cannot afford to lose extra CVP, don't send in those two 247 HS, but send in the full 467 Squad. The HS are more vulnerable in CC, even on a single attack vs both of them, for on a Casualty Reduction Random Selection tie dr they both die, whereas the 467 would only lose a HS and not have to roll RS, the enemy would also still be in Melee with the remaining HS.

- Pvt. Mark Nixon

When your opponent tries to fire his '45 BAZ WP at you, don't forget he must apply TEM to the TH DR. Even though it is SMOKE he is firing it is not being shot on the AREA Target Type. TEM do apply to the BAZ TH table.

[Another single issue promotion!]

- Pfc. Mark Nixon



When playing *One Step Forward* or any other scenario with several of those French 90r similar) AFVs featuring no Smoke Dispensers, yet with plenty of infantry to move forward (see also: *Swan Song, Counterstroke at Stonne, etc...*) drive those tanks forward CE, pop off a line of Vehicular Smoke Grenades [Ed: F.10](really impressive when done with a tank platoon) and then run the infantry up behind this screen. It won't always succeed, but when it does your opponent will be smarting. What's he going to do to stop it, fire at your +2 CE tank crew? Better this than later with a -2 DRM at your infantry running in the open. (After throwing the VSG, do remember to BU those 1MT/RST tanks so you'll be able to shoot.)

- Pfc. Mark Nixon.

Japanese with DC, I love it! Picture your Japanese Squad with a DC next to the enemy hex you want to hammer. Don't botch the attempt by placing this DC right away. Instead, kick things off with a different unit(s) Banzai Charging into that hex. The enemy must deal with the Banzai boys, and if Mr. Banzai survives all Defensive Fire there will be no enemy able to shoot at your DC Squad as he places the DC into the enemy hex. Mught nail down your own Banzai troops too, but it may be worth this price.

- Pfc. Mark Nixon.

Use a wounded Leader to kick-off a Banzai when several MF away from the enemy. This gets the MMC's moving, and after the first 3 MF's are spent the leader drops off to live another turn.

- Pfc. mark Nixon.

When facing a powerful enemy firelane as is common in a scenario like *Smith & Weston*, position your troops so you can Banzai into the location of the firelane weapon, which will immediately cancel the firelane, allowing your other troops to skate across otherwise deadly terrain.

- Pfc. Mark Nixon.

As your GI's move past the broken riff-raff remnants of the enemy, have them toss WP grenades on them. This might polish off these units and also might cause the enemy to roll your SAN without any danger of you rolling his SAN, since Smoke grenade attempts do not generate SAN. [Ed: You might just HoB this riff-raff, or stop your movement by rolling a six, so use with caution.]

[Jumping two ranks in one issue, WOW!]

- LCpl. Mark Nixon

When a stack of three squads want to move with a leader and cross open ground with smoke cover, don't just try smoke grenades one squad at a time, try with all three simultaneously. This way they all gain the Leader Movement Bonus, and if successful with more than one attempt you will have +3 Smoke (max) in the hex instead of just +2, or possibly even Smoke in more than one hex if predesignated.

- LCpl. Mark Nixon

Once your opponent has final fired, drive into his location and force him to use FPF; he will have to sustain fire any SW and so may cause a Malfunction as well as fail morale. Very effective against those "6" morale troops.

- LCpl. Mark Nixon.

Don't overlook the advantages of Harrassing Fire: It is great for curtailing enemy movement in an expanded area; it does not give the enemy the +1 Hindrance DRM as does a full FFE; it can "lock-on" to seven target hexes (those inside the outer ring of the attack) to preclude these enemy units stepping away from the attack, whereas a full FFE will "lock-on" to only one hex; you don't have to make that extra "black" draw due to unknown enemy units in the outer ring of the blast (only if such units are the only enemy units on or adjacent of the FFE counter itself do you have to make this draw); and it is a great way to keep DM on enemy units while also limiting further enemy routing.

- LCpl. Mark Nixon.

To help with pushing Guns, use Leader Movement Bonus, CX and spare pushing units. That is, the Leader lends two extra MF's, CX lends two more, and once the pushing unit is CX it can transfer the Gun to a second unit which will be available to utilize CX plus the other advantages the next MPh. The Leader moves along with the pushing unit but does not use CX himself, thus two MMC and a leader can push a Gun 4 hexes every MPh, provided all Manhandling DR's are made and you never forget to Transfer the Gun to the non-CX unit.

- LCpl. Mark Nixon.

When defending with Infantry SCW and Factories are in your setup area, plan to load these with your SCW defenders, for there is no Backblast penalty to worry about in this terrain. Especially in those factories where the enemy will be protected by a mere +1 TEM, you will find the perfect arena to use these weapons on Infantry.

[First NCO! You other guys better get on the ball.]

- Cpl. Mark Nixon.

Most of us move units one at a time but it is also important to be careful like this in the AFPh as well when facing Minefields. When you Advance a stack, the whole stack might suffer. Advancing in a single unit first (recon!) may reveal a lot.

- Cpl. Mark Nixon.

Watch your opponent's Rout Phase. His broken units must Rout to the nearest Woods/Building in MF! If adjacent to a woods hex and a woods/gully hex, the Rout must be into the woods hex because the woods/gully hex costs more MF to enter. If two hexes away from a building (3MF to reach) and two hexes away from a building beyond a wall (4MF to reach) he must rout to that first building. If in the middle of the Jungle on a path guess where he must Rout.....that's right, it only costs 1MF to Rout along the Path. Also, the Rout rules do not say that if you will take interdiction in Routing towards a certain Wood/Building you can ignore that Woods/Building for Rout purposes. You still must Rout to that nearest (in MF) Woods/Building, whether you take interdiction or not.

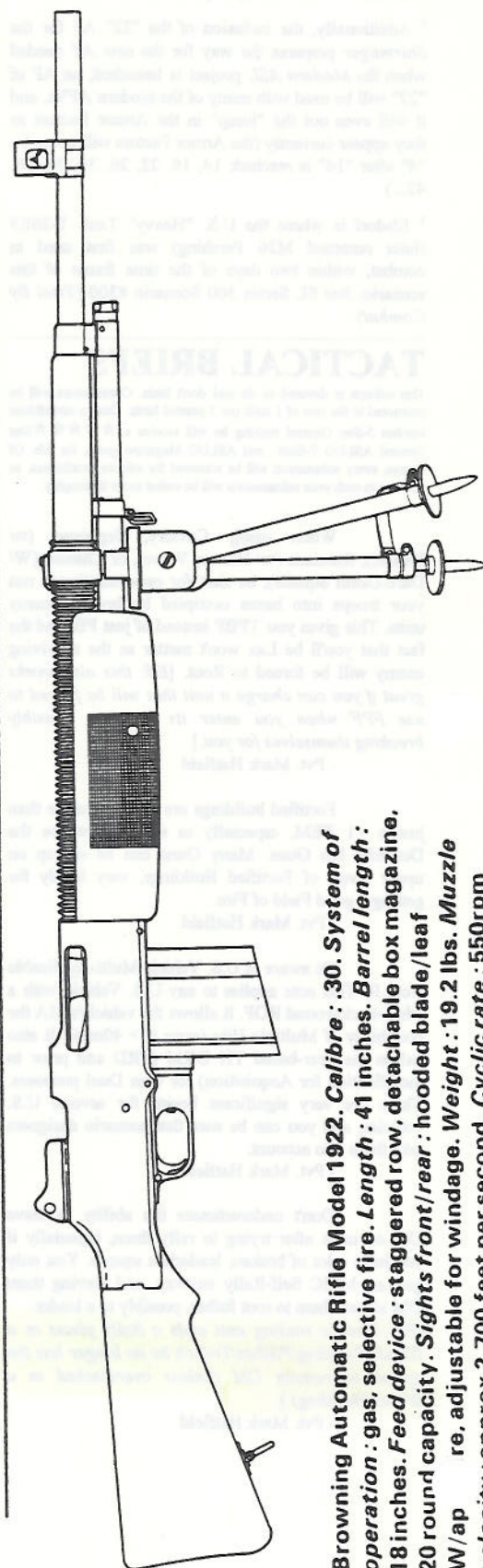
- Cpl. Mark Nixon

The best guy to hold point against a swarming attack is a Hero. As the enemy pile in on him he is the ultimate FPF warrior and can often FPF all day long. He will not suffer from FPF Pin results and so must roll a "10" or higher to get hurt, and even after that has a 66% chance (Wound dr) to keep on firing.

- Cpl. Mark Nixon.

When you find yourself in the center of an enemy FFE so that you cannot move without taking the hit, possibly your best bet for survival is to forget Prep Fire and forget movingg, roll to Entrench! If successful you will have gained a +4 DRM to deflect those OBA rounds.

- Cpl. Mark Nixon.



**Browning Automatic Rifle Model 1922. Calibre : .30. System of operation : gas, selective fire. Length : 41 inches. Barrel length : 18 inches. Feed device : staggered row, detachable box magazine, 20 round capacity. Sights front/rear : hooded blade/leaf W/ap re, adjustable for windage. Weight : 19.2 lbs. Muzzle velocity : approx 2,700 feet per second. Cyclic rate : 550rpm**



# RANDOM SELECTIONS,

## cont.

Mark Nixon

*Mark continues his tour of the ASL world. His article will conclude in the September issue of ASLUG.*

The awful truth is that none of us are professional writers (except maybe Rex Martin, but let's not hold that against him) and most of us probably are not always the most perceptive readers either. I think a lot of what we read about ASL is not all that well written and we compound the problems this creates by doing a poor job reading it. I am sure I am as guilty as anyone, for who has the time to proofread what they write and who among us scrutinizes every word and every thought in what they read? Give me a break; this is a hobby and it's supposed to be for fun. Until the modern-day Shakespeares of the world start writing about ASL, what we have is a collection of players willing to spend some of their time writing about their experiences with the game, be they shining moments of Tournament victory and laser-keen analysis, or journeys of woeful moves and half-cooked tips on playing ASL at the entry level. The alternative is that no one would ever get around to writing anything about the game if they all worked and edited and proofread and checked and double-checked and exhausted themselves with the writing process itself. It wouldn't leave enough time to play the game, leaving us only the words of those unfamiliar with the play of the game, and who would get excited about reading to play ASL according to someone who doesn't know how to play it? To sum up this whole thought, that which actually does see print on the game may not always represent the keenest bit of writing you will encounter in your lifetime, but it is the information conveyed in that writing which is usually the real substance. We could all stand to read the material with a healthy dose of discretion attached.

Let's extend these thoughts a bit and consider some specifics. I have written quite a bit about ASL, but is there anyone reading this who would accept without question something I wrote? Surely not, for I am as capable of error as anyone. {Leave space here for dry, sarcastic comments by the editor, all of which are pure fabrication, nonetheless.} [Paranoia will destroy ya.]

Don't believe what I write just because I wrote it, but if you see something new, check it out yourself.

Watch out for those who paraphrase rules, be it in their writing, speaking or even in any listing of errata. The only accurate errata lists are those which duplicate exactly the original wording of the errata as it comes from Avalon Hill (which is what you are getting with both the ASLUG and Rick Troha's listings; just beware of imitation copies.) I think all who write about the rules are forced to paraphrase to varying degree simply because it is too much to ask anyone to write or read the massive doses of rules which would have to be regurgitated to avoid paraphrasing. The reader simply must be very cautious here, and to look to his ASLRB to scope out the whole story on rules casually mentioned or briefly summarized in what he reads. The alternative style of writing is what I label "regurgitation of rules", and I am afraid I fail to see any value in it. May just as well write, "Read rule section blah-blah-blah" and save us all a lot of time or effort. I don't see any need to reprint rules but I most certainly do see a need for players to

interpret the way all the rules work together and to publish how they understand it is all transformed into tactics in the play of the game.

Another spot where precise writing and the lack thereof can prove most profound has been mentioned in an earlier section of this scrawling: NUTMAIL. I have seen NUTMAIL Questions worded so poorly or incompletely that the answer was rendered useless for the original intent of the NUTMAIL writer. From what I have seen, the NUTMAIL answers seem to do a good enough job answering the questions posed, but then to hear the originator explain the situation, quite often it seems the original question never correctly phrased the matter he wanted to ask. Of course there are many excellent NUTMAIL Q&A, but based on what I have seen there also must be a great many which are not so excellent, which are not being properly interpreted by the originator. It's all a matter of precise writing as well as reading. These are not simple matters at all, and extreme care must be used.

Still, I am sure that somewhere out there the ultimate ASL Warriors are just starting to learn the game, or maybe they have yet to be born. And the players who will write about the game with unparalleled skill are also out there, maybe just starting to consider what they would write about ASL as viewed from places like Brownsville Texas and Lander Wyoming. In the meantime we are stuck with what we have and none of us are in this for a profit. If you happen to read something which you think is odd, incorrect, misleading, or whatever I'd say chances are that you are making an accurate assessment and you should most definitely check it out yourself. After all, the more you investigate the ASLRB yourself, the better off you'll be. But don't lose sight of the fact that you may be jumping to the wrong conclusion. Take some time, do the research, and take a deep breath.

### PLAYING FOR FUN vs PLAYING TO WIN

I mentioned in a previous section there are many different reasons to play ASL, as there are many different individuals playing the game. We all have our reasons to spend so much time with the game, but I think most of us are in it for fun and to win. It can be fun to win and it can also be fun when we lose, although losing in and of itself would normally not be the cause of our enjoyment. Rather, the play of the game and comradeship with our opponents are what keep the game enjoyable even in defeat. But under the right circumstance we can also experience no fun in both victory and defeat. The game remains the same whether we win or lose, whether we have a good time of a bad time. It is the personality match-up of the players, or sometimes even just a particular mood, which governs our perception of the game, much more so than the game itself has any influence over us.

That bit about perception is an important distinction, for we have all played opponents, for example, who seem to be having a rather lousy time. Perhaps the individual was muttering, swearing to himself, complaining, arguing or even just being extremely quiet. Well, it is understandable how we might perceive this fellow having no fun at all, but that may be just an assumption. This may be the way this player reacts to the game, and he may actually be having the time of his life. Perhaps he doesn't even know you recoil at his foul language and shudder with each and every complaint he utters about his rotten dice. Unless he actually gets abusive or goes over the edge with his behavior, he is free to carry-on as he likes. None of us are actually authorized to dictate behavior to others, and beyond the norms accepted by society in general have no reason to even expect any certain behavior from an opponent. Never mind that I

have to agree it is sure a lot more fun playing an opponent who behaves in a fashion similar to my own (all that hooting and hollering); I will still plan on enjoying the game no matter if my opponent refuses to say a word, or is actually sullen or a true "luck-complainer" or even if (hard to believe as it may be) he is even more boisterous than me.

Understand, I am not suggesting anyone need endure rude and obnoxious behavior. I am merely emphasizing the fact that facing unknown opponents, an event quite likely to occur in tournament play, you will probably encounter some who will just not react to events the way you expect. This is nothing much more than a bit of common knowledge we all share, but perhaps we could all stand to consider how it "wears" in the arena of ASL tournament play. Most of us are accustomed to playing familiar FTF opponents; it can seem a bit awkward at times sitting down to spend several hard hours over a serious game with someone whose playing style and personality are not as immediately friendly and receptive as that old favorite opponent.

### RULES DISPUTES

Frankly, I believe Rules Disputes which occur during play cannot be resolved on the spot. The players might easily handle Rules Resolution and Rules Questions by both working with the ASLRB, errata and their own knowledge of the game, but if they still disagree after seriously trying to comprehend one another's point of view such that the matter has actually become a Rules Dispute, there is really no way for the two players on their own to adequately satisfy their collective demands of the ASLRB. At this point it is time for a friendly roll of the die or, in tournament play, perhaps time to call the TD for an official ruling. Either of these will get play past the point of contention, but the most important thing to happen here (the part which usually *doesn't* happen here) is to write down the rules question so it can be covered after the game. My opinion is that what happens in any one given game is important in the context of the two players enjoying themselves, but also can be valuable to ASL as a hobby if something comes out of it which can be shared by others. A written question on some vague aspect of the game which can be sent off to Avalon Hill for a NUTMAIL reply can be such a valuable little item.

Let's return to the point of the Rules Dispute and consider just what is going on there. In a game played for kicks between two familiar opponents I have to believe the players will either simply decide to play it one way or the other in order to keep the game moving (thus not actually arriving at a Rules Dispute per se, but merely a Rules Question) or will fully research the matter in the ASLRB and errata, maybe finally reach agreement (which makes it a Rules Resolution, not a Rules Dispute) or else eventually forsake resolving the matter and roll a friendly die. In this case one would hope that after spending so much time and effort getting into the nitty-gritty ins and outs of the particular situation, the players exercised the foresight to record this as a question to be sent off to Avalon Hill later. Unfortunately, of course, after spending so much time interrupting their game, it is also understandable that they would be anxious to get on with it, and the question often will be left unrecorded and ultimately forgotten.

That was easy. But what happens when we remove that familiar opponent and give you, instead, a player you don't know or even one you may suspect is particularly obstinate, opinionated, bullheaded, overbearing or whatever? Well, okay, maybe that's getting carried away, but what usually happens when



two players meeting for the first time (or maybe second or third time following a previous "chilly" confrontation) work themselves into a Rules Dispute? The opportunity is available here for the players to either resolve the matter amicably and maybe even strengthen their developing friendship, or to attain a satisfactory agreement which might, nevertheless, leave one or both of them muttering a bit under his breath, or they might even become agitated over the incident and continue the game only with a growing resentment building to a degree which could only be detrimental to their enjoyment of the play. It is even possible for the game to break-down at such a point over a matter debated, and finally argued, hot enough.

This last paints a picture ticklish enough to handle here, let alone on that rare day when it actually occurs. Please understand that by mentioning it here, I am not suggesting this is a common occurrence, or even something players should normally even have to worry about. In fact, I am sure this situation occurs much less often than many of us worry it might happen. It is the ultimate "ugly scene" in the nightmares of any gamer, and serious enough a threat to our gaming pleasure (it need happen only once to ruin your whole day or even a whole weekend of planned gaming mania) that I believe we need to take this look at what must surely be one of the most awkward situations gaming could ever get us into. But let me emphasize right now, it is not the game itself which creates this situation, but the clash of strong personalities. This is not really a game problem, it is a people problem. That is the beginning we must realize in order to avoid the agonizing spectacle of a people problem ruining our enjoyment of the game itself.

The rest of this account will not be an attempt to analyze human behavior, for I don't believe that is called for and I am no expert on the subject in any case. Instead, let's sneak back towards the original thought of what all this has to do with Elitism. It seems an easy enough transition to visualize an ASL player heading into a tournament match with one of the over-publicized "heavy-hitters" of the game and harboring worries over becoming victimized by Elitism. I doubt this is very common, for anyone alert enough to play ASL in the first place will usually not be overawed or too terribly concerned about facing off against anyone, no matter their illusory reputation. But I suppose it must happen on occasion, and probably more often in the minds of players yet to make it to that first tournament. Here is an important consideration, for the worry over Elitism is, in my opinion, much more prevalent with players who have not met the "old pros" in action, but who have formulated their ideas about Elitism from secondary sources. This is a subject already touched upon elsewhere in this never-ending saga, and one I see as a theme central to the Elitism issue. Once a player has met some of the "legends" of the game (and probably defeated a few of them) his thoughts of Elitism must surely begin to subside. I mean let's be real and take a look at these guys; there's nothing to write home to Aunt May about here, Spidey!

## HONESTY vs. THE ALTERNATIVE

What could be simpler than this? Isn't this just a matter of playing fair and not cheating, as well as refusing to play anyone caught cheating? Well, yes and no, for if you ever encounter an ASL player who cheats, I suggest you refuse to play, and likewise suggest you always play as fair and honest as possible. But like life itself, reality is just not always that black & white. The question does not hinge upon identifying a player who cheats, but of determining just what, exactly, we would be willing to label "cheating". Maybe on the surface this appears to be another

question easily answered, but I think if we consider some of the manifestations of playing this very complex game, it can be seen to be a most elusive concept.

Suppose I notice I have rolled my opponent's SAN but he says nothing. Have I cheated if I let it go and he is none-the-wiser? This seems to be the most often used example in this "honesty/cheating" debate, and ASL players tend to answer it both yes and no. But for right now, let's assume we decide it would not be cheating to do this. Okay, so now it becomes totally up to the opponent to notice when I roll his SAN, so what sort of responsibility does this put on me to guarantee he gets a good look at every potential SAN DR I make? If he is momentarily distracted while I am rattling off a string of lousy 2MC he rolled on me, how much time do I have to allow between rolls so he can notice any SAN I generate?

Suppose I am one of those "heavy hitters" (I know Gary, I know, but try to pretend anyway) playing an ASL rookie. My opponent has been moving around his fleet of AFV's without accurately counting all the VCA changes, but I have not worn myself out counting every single MP he has expended since the moves have all occurred far away from the action anyway. But then he charges in with a tank to move against my broken 9-2 in an attempt to nail him against the boardedge and eliminate him for failure to rout. I immediately go on the alert and point out a missed VCA change he must pay for 1MP, then a second, then a brush hex which costs 2MP, not just 1MP, and suddenly the tank will not have enough MPs to hammer my 9-2. My opponent complains that he has been moving this way all game long, and why didn't I point any of these things out earlier? Well, that's probably a very good question. Have I cheated in this case, allowing my opponent to repeatedly do something illegal and only pointing it out to him when it is convenient for me? We all must play by the rules, but to what degree is it the responsibility of the player to ensure his opponent abides by the rules all the time?

Finally, (and here is where it gets really tough) suppose while playing I come across a situation which I know has been amended by a NUTMAIL or MAC SEZ response. Here is the situation come to life on the playing board and I have to think my opponent has no knowledge of the "potential revision". Furthermore, I may not even have written proof of the matter along with me (Billy Bob has it, but he's home weeding the garden this weekend). Is it fair to allow the situation on the playing surface develop to a point where my knowledge of unreleased rules clarification's can be used to my own advantage? For that matter, will I even be able to prove my point or somehow convince my opponent that what I tell him about the update is fact? On the other hand, if I opt to not inform him of the rules changes, am I remiss just the same? Maybe the clarification works to my disadvantage, and (in a perfect world) I should have the same chance of convincing my opponent of the validity of a clarification which helps him in the game, as one which hurts him. Well, of course we do not live in a perfect world and I think this little example makes it quite clear that when we attempt to find the honesty in a situation involving fluctuating rules there is probably no correct answer. This is a return to a previous thought, for we are dealing with a human problem here, not a game problem. We can all accept that the game is not perfect, and probably would be better off if only we could also accept that people (including ourselves) are not perfect either.

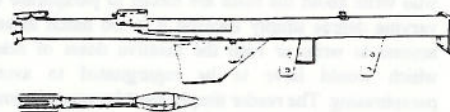
## THE MYSTICISM OF CELEBRITY

This account seems to spend a great deal of effort tearing down the hard-earned reputation of some

of the ASL "old pros". I happen to think the people represented by those reputations are fairly tough customers and well suited to take it. But let's be sure none of us are guilty of envisioning our ASL hobby in the clutches of desperadoes whose legendary status can be attributed solely to a few small bits of creative writing done about them. There are many tactics a writer can use to illuminate a subject; in this case we're dealing with creating an aura of invincibility around an ASL player. Today's target is my buddy Dave Ginnard, the "Scariest ASL Player In The World", (kudos to Pete "The Impaler" Mudge for that bit of insight). Now just exactly what Pete meant by that nickname is any body's guess, and your chances of actually getting a straight answer out of Pete if you managed to pin him down in one spot long enough to ask him, offer no guarantee whatsoever. Maybe your best bet would be to hit Pete with this on enduring the 74th hour Oktoberfest (you know, before Pete has gotten any sleep yet) because at that point his legs will be about as useful to him as the German counter tray he just spilled his 18th cup of coffee into. That way he can't run away from you.

Already the little info above has begun to convey the image that anyone who could play ASL for 74 consecutive waking hours and drink 18 cups of coffee (obvious exaggerations that these are) must surely have a good reason to nickname a fellow player the "Scariest ASL Player in the World". Thus, even before anything is actually written about Herr Ginnard, we have begun to formulate an image of him, and all this from a bit of what Dr. Ginnard himself likes to call a "liberal embellishment" of the facts. (Why heck, of course Pete doesn't play 74 hours straight and drink 18 cups of coffee; I've never seen him endure more than 69 hours and 15 cups—What a pushover!)

So you begin to see the pattern, I think. It's a little bit of fact mixed with a lot of exaggeration and healthy doses of friendly ribbing and significant quantities of tongue-in-cheek. Never mind that it is admittedly terribly unfair that the only players who get written about like this are the ones known to someone willing (and foolish enough) to write about them. Maybe there is some image killing going on here, and likewise some image building as well. Does this flash a message that all this great fun should come to an end? Should we stop writing about Eric "the Red", Mitch "the Destroyer" and Bill "Sleazemeister" Sisler? Or should we encourage more players to write more? My vote is for the latter, for I would truly enjoy reading about the real/imagined ASL exploits of more players. If only I knew players like Cloyde Angell and Steve Sulzby I would gladly write about them (and then they could hate me for it) but someone who knows them and plays them must do it. These are just a few examples, but I think the message is clear; of course it is unfair that some players have these images built up around them. We could just as easily identify similar sorts of characteristics for every single player. In fact, I think we should do it. So far, all we have is a very meager beginning. The goal is for everyone to be an ASL celebrity. What do you think?



The US 2.56-inch Anti-tank Rocket Launcher M9 (Bazooka). Weight: 14.5 lbs. Length: 55 inches. Weight of rocket: 3.4 lbs. Weight of explosive charge: 0.5 lbs (HE). Range: 700 yards absolute maximum (efficient range is about 100 to 150 yards). Muzzle velocity: 270 feet per second at 70 degrees Fahrenheit (MV was higher at a higher temperature, lower at a lower temperature).



## ANNOUNCEMENTS/ CORRECTIONS

Corrections from Issue #2

- Designer's notes for A Tough Nut to Crack: Airbursts are not applicable in Palm groves/Orchards.

- ASLUG Scenario #3: A Tough Nut to Crack - Roll a die to determine Wind direction. Odd = NE, Even = NW.

Corrections from Issue #4

- Scenario Analysis: A Tough Nut to Crack - FFNAM is applicable in trench locations. FFMO is not.

ASLUG has acquired ATP and will combine the two formats into one magazine, ASLUG. I will attempt to fulfill as much of the outstanding ATP subscriptions as the settlement between ATP and ASLUG allows.

ASLUG is also in negotiations with In Contact with the aim of completing IC#3 and playtesting/revising old IC scenarios for re-issuance in ASLUG format.

I wish to thank all of my playtesters for their continued support and without whose help none of this would be possible.

My most grateful appreciation's go to:

Dirk Heinz and his group  
Rob wolkey and his group  
Bill Archer  
Doug Blount  
Dan Dolan  
Glen Gray  
Russell Mueller  
Bill Sisler  
Bruce Wehrle  
and  
Jake the Parrot

My undying gratitude goes to:

Mark Neukom

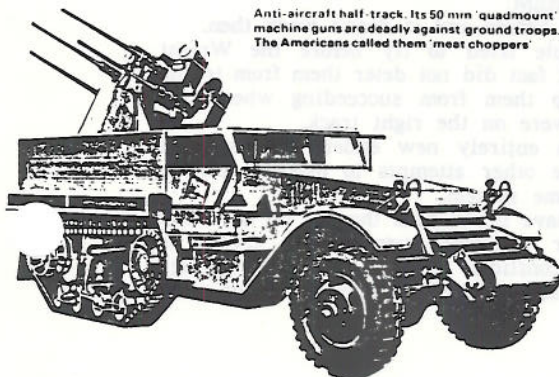
If anyone has been left out, rest assured it is my feeble memory (this admission ought to set that Ohio renegades blood to boiling), and nothing to do with any forgotten persons merit.

Thanks for your patience and support,  
FORT

### Over the Next Hill:

- Two new scenarios covering Marine Raider actions.
- The continuation of Mark's article.

Anti-aircraft half-track. Its 50 mm 'quadmount' machine guns are deadly against ground troops. The Americans called them 'meat choppers'.



## CONTEST #3 - Answers.

Many seemed to find Contest #3 very easy even though I tried to use obscure AFV's (I promise the next contest will be much more difficult).

There were several submissions to contest #3 including three telephone calls and five GEmail entries. I must outlaw these communication mediums in the future and insist on the U.S. postal services postmark as the tie breaker. With this in mind, all future contest submissions will only be accepted if received by U.S. postal service mail.

I was faced with choosing the winners by several convoluted methods so I decided to give all correct submissions received by the 20th of July a free issue and listing here in ASLUG.

Those persons with a correct response are: Todd Hively, Mark Johnson, Erik Christensen, Chuck Hale, Alvaro Gonzalez, Jim Shearer.

The AFV's in contest #3 are, from top to bottom:

1. Italian L3 Lf (aka. L35/Lf) Lancia Fiamme
2. Italian L3/35 tankette
3. British Mk VIB Light Tank
4. Japanese Medium Tank Type 3 Chi-Nu w/ 75mm Gun.
5. Japanese Light Tank Type 95 Ha-Go
6. French R-35

Condolences go to Ray Woloszyn who got all but one correct.



Lieut. General Patton,  
Commanding US Third Army

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## AN OPEN LETTER TO GARY FORTENBERRY AND THE READERSHIP OF THE ASLUG NEWSLETTER REGARDING THE MODERN ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER PROJECT:

I would like to thank you for your enthusiastic support of the *Modern Advanced Squad Leader* project that I have been working on, as well as your invitation to include my first MASL scenario, *Grounding Noriega*, in your ASLUG Newsletter. As you know from our discussions, I have been working on this project off and on for some years now (I still have some modern-era counters that I made in 1984 for the old SL system), and it has only been recently that I have felt that the new rules were in enough of a finished state to allow me to unveil some of the work that I have done. This unveiling occurred this past May at the Gamex 1993 convention in Los Angeles, when *Grounding Noriega* appeared as the final scenario in a day-long tournament (see the After Action Report in the July 1993 issue of ASLUG). This very successful first "public" playing of the MASL project, along with the showing around that you did with it at the ASL Team Tournament in Austin and at Origins in July, has encouraged me to attempt to convince Avalon Hill that a project of this nature is in the best interests of the game system (and, obviously, in the best interests of Avalon Hill, too). To that end, I have sent to Rex Martin, Bob McNamara, Charles Kibler and Don Greenwood at Avalon Hill a copy each of this new MASL scenario, along with its rules section, mapboard and counters. Along with these items, I stated my intent to try to rally support for this project amongst ASL gamers, the purpose being to get Avalon Hill to rethink their policy on ASL in the Post-World War II era.

This expansion of the ASL game system is intended, upon its completion, to allow the ASL player to recreate any tactical situation that occurred in any of the major (and many of the minor) wars in the Post-World War II era. It will do this by *expanding on* the existing rules--adding on the elements that have become common since the end of the Second World War--as well as adding new nationalities and orders of battle. Thus, the *Modern ASL* project will build on an existing *foundation*, for which we already know and understand the standard rules and concepts. This foundation, ASL Chapters A-P, will be expanded through the addition of two subsequent chapters--tentatively given the letters Q and R (tentative because Avalon Hill is sure to create additional chapters after P to deal with future *Historical ASL* situations)--which will cover the various elements of modern warfare and the many nationalities involved. With the completion of these MASL chapters, all that would remain would be to release the various MASL modules, which could vary in scope from covering an entire war (the Falklands War of 1982 could be covered in an entire module, for example), or a pair of belligerent neighbors (the entire Indian and Pakistani orders of battle for 1965 and 1971, for example), or a single element of a greater conflict (the U.S.M.C. in the period 1965-1973, for example), or even a *Historical Modern ASL* module (the Israeli 7th Armored Brigade's defense of the northern Golan Heights in the Yom Kippur War, for example). Not unlike ASL in the World War II era, the possibilities are seemingly endless.

Sadly, after having stated all of these high ideals for the system, I must also mention that there are ASL players who are against a project such as this. In my discussions with various people about the feasibility of such a project, I have heard many

reasons for opposing the expansion of the game system into the Post-World War II period. As someone with a relatively open mind on the subject, I have tried to better understand the reasons that people have for standing against a modern-era ASL. Obviously, since I am attempting to promote this project, I need to understand all of the arguments against it. I have listened, and I have taken notes. I have not yet heard an *intellectual* argument against the project that could not be laid to rest through logical thought.

I believe that the people opposed to this project belong to one of two groups. The first group--which does not base their reasoning on logical thought--just doesn't want the system messed with. It is theirs, and anything beyond the scope of the status quo with the game is off limits. This group includes "radicals" like Philip Lohre who, in a letter in the *ASL Annual '91*, stated his opposition to bringing the entire Pacific Theatre of Operations into the system (my apologies to Mr. Lohre if he has since changed his mind). Ultimately, this group probably will not play the various sections of the system that are "profane" to them. I must admit that this group frustrates me beyond explanation, primarily because they attempt to keep those of us that *want* to play in the Pacific Theatre of Operations (for example) from doing so. If they aren't going to play that part of the system, why should they care if it exists so that I can play it?

The second group is different. They have what they consider to be logical reasons for not wanting to see the system expanded beyond the Post-1945 boundary. At times, I find their reasoning frustrating, but *at least they have a concrete reason for their opposition*. At least then, through words and reasoning, I can attempt to show them that their concerns are for naught, or perhaps that their reasoning is not entirely logical. They are concerned because other groups/newsletters have attempted a modern-era ASL before, and perhaps did not do a professional job. They have certain ideas about the conduct of modern warfare, and seem to be hung up by that modern war catch-all phrase "what can be seen, can be killed". They express concern about the organization of modern military units, and whether they are compatible with the ASL system. To many of them, the history of the Post-War world is not as familiar as the Second World War is, and that makes them uncomfortable. Lastly, they are concerned that the *game system* and its players will be torn asunder, or changed, by expanding it into the Post-World War II era.

### THE REASONS I HAVE HEARD FOR NOT EXPANDING ASL INTO THE POST-WORLD WAR II ERA, AND MY RESPONSES TO THEM:

#### 1. It's been done before and it didn't work then.

- Other people tried to fly before the Wright brothers, but that fact did not deter them from trying to do it--or keep them from succeeding when they knew that they were on the right track.

- This is an entirely new effort, done without reference to those other attempts to make a modern version of the game system.

- Because I have never seen them, I do not know how these other attempts went about trying to recreate modern conflicts. Perhaps it was it through SSR only, and used existing unit counters, or some



## Letter to ASLUG on MASL Project

other half-finished method. The *Modern ASL* project is intended to be a *complete* treatment of the subject matter, allowing the *ASL* player to recreate nearly any Post-World War II conflict. This will be accomplished by adding two new chapters to the *ASL* system, one chapter being a new rules section, and the other being a combined section on Nationality Distinctions and "Chapter H" style information on the various nations involved.

• Understand that my *intent* is to have *Avalon Hill* release the *Modern ASL* project as additions to the existing rulebook and additional modules; I do not wish to attempt to release it independently or as part of a newsletter. As I envision it, this project is far too big to be carried through to completion by a guy with a word processor and a photocopier. This expansion is going to require *new counters*, and lots of them! Obviously, *Avalon Hill's* handling of this project would ensure that the quality of the product matches what we have come to expect from the company that has brought us this far with the system. My purpose in presenting *Grounding Noriega* and parts of the *Modern ASL* rules in this newsletter is only to show that it can work, and to gather support for the project.

### 2. War in modern times is different than it was in World War II.

• The battles of 1941 are not that different than those of 1991. Just as in World War II, the soldiers of today: 1) still fight as a part of various military organizations, 2) still have specially selected men making the decisions for them, 3) still use a firearm as their basic weapon, 4) still ride around the battlefield in armored boxes, 5) are still attacked from the air, and 6) still have the majority of their casualties caused by artillery. The argument that "war is different" might be valid if we were discussing the 50 year period from 1868 to 1918, when so many changes occurred to the face of war: the appearance of breechloading artillery, repeating rifles, tanks, and airplanes; the machine gun being widely issued and employed; the refinement of chemical warfare and the decline of cavalry in the combined arms triad. But we are not attempting to fill in the gap between 1868 and 1918; it is the period 1945 to 1993 that we are concerned with, and this system can handle the job quite well.

### 3. Modern warfare is just too deadly.

• All war is deadly. Just because the American Civil War was devastating to our nation in terms of the casualties that it produced, does this mean that we should not create "conflict simulations" of that struggle?

• There are tactics that can be used to minimize casualties. This was true in World War II, just as it is today. Finding, using, and refining those tactics of conservation of your force is what makes this game system a challenge.

• Even in *ASL* as we play it now, some game units are more "deadly" than others (e.g., the German Tiger II heavy tank as compared to the American M5A1 light tank); does this mean that *Avalon Hill* should have left them out of the system?

• The statement itself is not necessarily true. The low Coalition casualties in the 1991 Gulf War are a prime example, as are the low overall ground casualties on both sides of the Falklands War in 1982.

• There have been plenty of wars that come under the heading of "low intensity conflicts" that will be able to be simulated using the *Modern ASL* system.

### 4. In many armies, the Fire Team is now the basic unit of infantry organization, not the squad.

• Whether intentionally or not, the designers of the *ASL* system have provided the equivalent of the Fire Team in their orders of battle for all nationalities: in *ASL* terms, the Half Squad. Additionally, the squad *still* plays a very important role in military organizations, as it is the next element for maneuver and training (that the squad is still considered a basic element for maneuver is evidenced by the fact that most modern armored personnel carriers are designed to carry a *squad-sized* unit).

### 5. The ranges of modern weapons are too great for use with the *ASL* system.

• While some modern weapons do possess the ability to hit their targets (and therefore kill them) at very long ranges, this does not prevent the design of scenarios in which some weapons can fire much farther than is allowable on the board configuration in use. As an example, in *Buying the Farm* (Deluxe *ASL* Scenario 14), the maximum range of any shot taken in that scenario would be 22 hexes (ignoring all terrain); however, the 50L AT Gun in the German OB has a maximum range of 75 hexes—a range far surpassing the longest possible shot using that board configuration. The 88LL AT Gun present in the same scenario is an even better example with its maximum range of 379 hexes. Knowing this, is it irresponsible of us to expand the game system so that it can include scenarios with Sagger ATGMs in the OB, when—given a particular board configuration—the maximum range of any shot is *less* than the maximum range of that weapon? Obviously, a precedent has already been set, and the *Modern ASL* expansion continues within that framework.

• Not all of the modern-era *ASL* scenarios will feature anti-tank guided missiles and 120mm tank guns. There are nearly an endless supply of infantry actions available in the period from 1945 to 1993, as I am hoping that *Grounding Noriega* will highlight. These scenarios-to-be can do an excellent job of showing how infantry does battle in the Post-War period. My own suggestion is to start with a series of Historical *ASL* scenarios about the Battle of Goose Green in the Falklands, 1982. This was a classic infantry battle, fought both day and night in poor weather, in which both artillery and air power played a limited supporting role, and in which the morale and training of the troops engaged proved to be the deciding factor. Isn't this what the best *ASL* scenarios are all about?

### 6. The history of the Second World War is more familiar than the often-confusing Post-1945 conflicts (and sometimes it is hard to tell the "good" side from the "bad" side).

• What better way to learn current history than by replaying (or "rewriting") it? After all, did you really know all of those details about those World War II battles before you read the History/Aftermath section of the scenario cards?—or did you really know all that stuff about Italian artillery before you read Bob McNamara's notes in Chapter H? This is interactive history, and learning in this way is *fun*.

• If you don't like learning "on the battlefield," take a trip to your local library and do a little reading. There are shelves full of good historical works on the Post-War era, and learning in this way can be *fun* too.

• While it is true that the cold black and white of "wrong" and "right" has grayed considerably since



## Letter to ASLUG on MASL Project

1945, I question whether this truly would have a bearing on the game. I cannot say that I know of anyone who would not play a particular nationality because of that nation's political or moral standards--if this were true for a broad spectrum of people, the game would *never* be played.

### 7. Some people find only World War II appealing.

• So stick to playing ASL in the period of 1939-1945. There are an untold number of scenarios yet to be designed from that war, and with the OBs now nearly complete, surely there will be many more historical modules. *But please do not oppose a modern-era ASL and keep those of us who want to play in that era from being able to do so!*

### 8. Introducing a modern-era ASL will split the players into two factions: those who *will* play the modern version, and those who *won't*.

• And never the twain shall meet? Not necessarily. The entire group of players will still have the common ground of World War II on which they can meet, even if some will refuse to play in the Post-1945 period. Technically, we should be experiencing that phenomenon already with the group of players that don't wish to play in the Pacific Theatre of Operations; I have yet to run into the problem, however.

• In my experience, actually playing the game tends to be more important to most people than whether they are playing an aspect that they don't like. Even the most conservative opponents that I play on a regular basis would prefer to play *something* (even a type of scenario that they might not normally play) than to not play at all. I think that the hesitation to play a modern expansion to the game system would fade very quickly in most players.

• Any dangers of a rift forming between the "will" and "won't" players is far offset by the prospect of the new players to the game system that the expansion to *Modern ASL* will bring. As we can all appreciate, someone must get pretty excited about this game to want to get into it from scratch--it seems to me a daunting task. There are many gamers out there that just don't want to expend the effort (or the cash) to play a World War II game with a rule book that thick. They would rather play their existing modern-era games or miniatures. But if ASL were expanded into the Post-War era, many of these players would see the advantages of this game system--they know that it is *good*, because they have heard about it's reputation--and get aboard our train in order to play the modern scenarios. And what will happen when they learn to play those modern scenarios? They will automatically know how to play the World War II scenarios as well. And occasionally they will play them. *That* is a *good* way to bring new blood into the system; they are coming along because they really want to. And don't fool yourself, we *need* new blood in this system for it to remain vibrant and exciting. We also need young blood. And *Modern ASL* can bring that into the game system as well. When I introduced *Modern ASL* and *Grounding Noriega* at the Gamex Tournament, the people that were the *most* excited by it--and nearly everybody was excited by it--were the younger players. The younger players also seemed to be able to take to the concepts in the rules more readily as well. Indeed, second place in that tournament was captured by a *seventeen-year-old* player who, as the PDF, stopped the U.S. SEAL Teams in *Grounding Noriega*. Perhaps the younger players take to *Modern ASL* so readily because they are growing up with these things happening around them,

so that they can relate to them more readily. Perhaps World War II doesn't have the mystic for them that it may have for those of us that are "older" players. Whatever the reason, these are the people that we want to be learning to play our game system--unless we can live with it becoming extinct.

### 9. A modern-era ASL will change the system too much.

• The addition of the Japanese to ASL changed one of the *basic tenets* of the game system: i.e., that if a squad failed a morale check, it became broken. This radical modification to the system in no way destroyed or ruined ASL; the change in the way morale check failures were handled for the Japanese only served as the method chosen to recreate (in game terms) the way that their infantry responded in that situation. I believe that with hindsight, most of us can agree that it was wise to make that choice with the system (those who cannot agree with that are most likely not playing in the Pacific Theatre of Operations). The way that I currently have the *Modern ASL* project mapped out, there is nothing that is in need of as radical a change as the handling of the Japanese required. As I discussed before, *Modern ASL* will build on an existing foundation, adding elements as they are needed--Chapters A-G will still be required in order to play the modern scenarios, just as they are required for use with *Grounding Noriega*.

I hope that I have been able to logically address the concerns that many people may have about the expansion of the ASL system into the Post-War period. All that remains is for me to ask for the support of all ASL players for this continuation of the system. At present, it is the semi-official policy of Avalon Hill to *not* extend the boundaries of ASL beyond the 1930s and the 1950s. In order to encourage the "powers-that-be" to change that policy, we must let them know that we, the people that play the system--the people that spend the money to gobble up every module that is released--want to see it cover more than just the Second World War. In order to do this we must actually put pen to paper and tell someone that this is what we want, because they cannot read our minds. I am urging each of you to write to Avalon Hill and express your feelings on this subject. Alternatively, write to myself, or to Gary Fortenberry care of the ASLUG Newsletter and let us know how you feel. Gary and I will collect the letters that we receive and forward them to Avalon Hill. Please write someone about this, because a silent majority does *not* have it's needs catered to!

Anyway, thank you for your time, and Gary, thank you for providing the means through which to present this project to the masses. I hope that everyone enjoys *Grounding Noriega*, and can see--through that *Modern ASL* scenario and the things that we have discussed in this letter--the possibilities inherent in this game system. We are approaching the end of an era; don't allow yourself to be blinded by fears or prejudice so that you cannot see the path clearly ahead of you.

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# NOTES ON MASL SCENARIO MJN 1e

## GROUNDING NORIEGA

### INTRODUCTION

After the invasion of Panama wound down in January of 1990, I became intrigued by the many stories of small unit actions that emerged via the various news-gathering organizations. One such story involved a near-disastrous attack by U.S. Navy SEAL (Sea-Air-Land) commandos on a Panamanian airfield, in which the lightly-armed U.S. force suffered a serious set-back at the hands of a reinforcing Panamanian armored car platoon. I felt that this engagement was nicely suited to the ASL format, and since I had been working on a set of modern-era ASL rules for some years I put it into long-term memory to dredge up when I had started to work on scenarios. Three years later the armored cars had disappeared into a fog of journalistic inaccuracy, I had gained some experience working on various ASL counters and scenarios, and, most importantly, I felt I was ready to tackle the situation as a scenario due to having a substantial portion of the *Modern ASL* rules in a state of semi-completion. Since I had been tapped to run a tournament at the upcoming Gamex convention in May of 1993, I decided to look into the feasibility of using this SEAL scenario as a way of showcasing the work that I had done on the *Modern ASL* project, as well as introducing *Modern ASL* to the gaming public. Fortunately, *Grounding Noriega* (as the SEAL scenario came to be known) used portions of only five rules sections from the still under-construction ASL Chapter Q, two of which (Street Lights and Hangars) were created specifically for use in that scenario. Additionally, an abbreviated form of Chapter R was also used, containing all sections of the Nationality Distinctions necessary to play *Grounding Noriega*. Since the armored cars had conveniently disappeared from the PDF Order of Battle, I decided that the need for multi-color counters was minimal, and therefore the idea of doing the scenario for the tournament was realistic and attainable. (As a side note, just prior to using this scenario in the tournament, I showed it to Gary Fortenberry, with whom I had been collaborating on his ASLUG Newsletter. Strangely enough, Gary had known one of the SEALs that was killed in this engagement, Lt (j.g.) John Connors. This scenario is dedicated to Lt. Connors and the other SEALs who paid the highest price that night in Panama.)

### CHAPTER Q. MODERN ASL; BRIEFLY

Conveniently for me, the forces engaged at the Paitilla Airport did not necessitate a large amount of rules to enable their actions to be recreated. The primary "new" items (i.e., those items not covered in the basic ASL rules) that needed to be addressed were Grenade Launchers, the various Light Anti-Tank Weapons available, and the advanced Night Vision Equipment. Additionally, I added rules sections for Street Lights and Hangars rather than making them Special Rules, since they would be applicable for other possible scenarios (as well as being a bit too complicated to fit on the scenario card).

The section on Grenade Launchers (Q1.) comes nearly complete in its *Grounding Noriega* form, missing only the portion describing their use with squads/HS. Part way through the playtest process I added a completely new To Hit table for GL, since the use of the C3 To Hit Table made them just too powerful. The way that I had the rules, they could use the Vehicle/Infantry Target Type at < half their maximum range, and had to use the Area Target Type at ≥ half their maximum range. Unfortunately, this arrangement allowed for quite high To Hit Numbers, and made them deadly beyond their capabilities. I also changed the rules back to the way that I had *originally* written them as far as their use as a SW (i.e., Q1.101 was put back in) was concerned, and all GL ROF were lowered. Jim Millard had provided a great deal of pressure for me to do this, and his perseverance resulted in a wise choice. Special Ammunition was handled more like Smoke Dispensers by the use of an Availability Number (as opposed to a Depletion Number), and this eased record keeping and was much easier to play, being somewhat akin to the PF in that a unit may or may not have



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someone with a HEAT/SMOKE/IR round ready to use. Lastly, I placed limitations on the abilities of GL SMOKE and IR since a GL isn't quite ordnance.

RPG-7s and M136 LAWs (the new U.S.-built version of the Swedish AT-4) were quite easy to incorporate into these rules since they function in much the same manner as Panzerfausts. All that was needed was to assign Usage numbers and drms, and make up the Q.2 LATW To Hit Table. Jim Millard objected to the use of RPG-7s as an *inherent* SW to each squad/HS, since it would normally be issued one per squad (actually probably less in the PDF), and not every HS should have one once a squad Deploys. My (lame) response was that I didn't want to have to make more counters, but in actuality, as far as the PDF was concerned, they wouldn't get the opportunity to fire that many because of the low Usage dr necessary to fire one. This itself would nicely simulate the fewer RPG-7s available on the sharp edge of the battle. Jim's recommendation is probably something to remember for future work, but I have a hard time seeing someone including 26 RPG-7 counters to go with the 26 Egyptian infantry counters in the *Assault on Chinese Farm* scenario: making it an inherent SW seems the way to go in this situation.

The Night Vision Equipment section was nearly cut from this scenario because it was hardly used in one of our playtests. However, a call to Wayne Isbell, an engineer with Varo, Inc. (the makers of many types of night vision goggles/sights), confirmed the functional abilities of the various Second Generation Image Intensification Sights for me (I had overestimated the amount of degradation that occurred due to illumination on the battlefield) and I determined to keep them in the scenario, especially since they played such an important role in the fighting. These rules are the hardest section to understand that were included for use with *Grounding Noriega*, so much so that I decided an example was necessary.

Again, Street Lights almost didn't make the cut, but since they had figured so prominently in the visual picture of the battle that I formed when reading McConnell's account of the fighting, I insisted on keeping them intact. As it is, they are quite easily incorporated into the scenario.

My visual picture again played a large role in the inclusion of a specialized building to represent Hangars; they are rather simply handled here, being mainly factories without one wall. I had originally included one hex of "Fortified Hangar", but it went south when the cost of real estate on the scenario card became quite expensive.

## CHAPTER R. NATIONALITY DISTINCTIONS; BRIEFLY

The United States was easily handled here, since all that was needed were the particulars about the M136 LAW and the 40\* GL, as well as the special rules needed for the SEALs. I had already decided that a new counter was necessary, and it was going to have to fill the role of all U.S. Special Forces troops from the late 1970s on. I decided that the use of a crew counter, rather than squad & HS counters, would nicely recreate the "Team" style of organization common to SF units; additionally, it would give certain benefits not normally available to HS (like self-rally capability), while keeping them more fragile to fire (i.e., K results) than a squad would be. The 4 Firepower factor typifies the heavy personal firepower normally carried by these units, and the Spraying Fire and Assault Fire abilities are obvious additions. Although they are a crew, they are Smoke/WP grenade capable through the use of their Smoke Exponent. The 3 Range has been argued as being short, especially for units armed with CAR-15 carbines/M16 assault rifles (as these SEALs most likely were); however, it must be remembered that these SF crew counters also must serve as SF units equipped with other (possibly shorter-ranged) weapons--such as the popular MP5 sub-machine gun--as well. This, coupled with the fact that the SF unit is intended to operate at close range, gives the 3 Range total validity. The 8 Morale speaks for itself; these are the most elite troops of an all-volunteer force--hence the higher broken morale and self-rally ability as well. The other capabilities given by R2.37 are icing on the cake for the SF crews, reflecting



the unusual nature of their training, and allowing them to operate under extraordinary circumstances, as well as emphasizing their relative worth to the nation that fields them. The only disappointing thing about these new SF crew counters is that I miscalculated the BPV of these units--they are several points shy of what they probably should be. (The color of the tournament versions of these counters also left much to be desired, being a bright neon green. Unfortunately, this was as close as I could come to American lime green without spending an inordinate amount of money. Hopefully, I will be able to find a more suitable color match for future versions.)

The Panamanian Defense Forces represented a challenge, since I didn't particularly want to make an entirely new counter sheet. Luckily, the G.M.D. Chinese units/SW fit the bill quite closely to what I wanted, with relatively poor elite troops and first line troops being the equivalents of Partisans. This does a good job of recreating poorly trained AK-47-armed troops. The only questionable aspect of the use of G.M.D. Chinese MMC/SMC was the raised broken side morale of the elite squads (I'm not sure that this is warranted, however, they would occur only rarely in scenarios, so I decided I could live with it), and the unchanged BPVs (which again might not be a problem). R5.11, R5.12 and R5.4 further define the PDF with various notes, including the use of SMOKE grenades, HoB modifications, etc. Like the rules further defining the Italians/Axis Minors, these form the PDF SMC/MMC into units readily easy to crack if subjected to concentrated pressure. PDF SW are handled through the use of G.M.D. Chinese SW with several modifications; this works well since many PDF "heavy" weapons were of U.S. origin. The MMG is lightened to 3PP so that it simulates either the M1919A4/M60 MGs, and the 40 MTR is modified to become a dedicated Grenade Launcher such as the West German H & K/American M79. Finally, the PDF get limited use of the RPG-7 as an inherent LATW (see the discussion above); this is covered with R5.21. Overall, the use of the G.M.D. Chinese counters to second for the PDF works well, but if other scenarios were undertaken other (color) counters would be necessary for the V-150/V-300 armored cars, ZPU-4 AA Machine Guns, and other assorted weaponry.

### SCENARIO HISTORY AND AFTERMATH

The History/Aftermath of this scenario is heavily based on the account of the battle as it appears in the McConnell book. I tried to provide as much detail as possible (especially since the details were available), since I feel that the best History/Aftermath sections give the reader a good idea about what it was like to really be present when the event occurred. Additionally, a well written History/Aftermath will provide both sides with hints of things to do/not do in the course of the scenario. This is true of *Grounding Noriega*, and players new to the situation can pick up several pointers here.

### ORDERS OF BATTLE

#### Panamanian

The PDF OB is (unfortunately) based largely on conjecture, and it ultimately came down to a decision of what was needed to make the scenario balanced. Despite this sound endorsement for more research, however, the PDF OB only changed once during the playtest, and that was to add only the MMG and the Sangar--I apparently got it close to what was needed from the start. The use of two elite squads is probably a bit much for this situation, but I thought that they would need the extra firepower. The SMCs that are present typify the poor leadership of the PDF; indeed, many Panamanian leaders bolted when the shooting started, leaving their troops without guidance or an ability to coordinate. These troops are probably rather heavily-armed when it comes to SW, but I rationalized that a vital installation such as this airport would be allowed something extra in the way of firepower. The Sangar was provided as a sandbagged parapet-style position. The two unarmed HS represent the private security guards hired by the drug smugglers to provide protection and privacy for their aircraft. The FB represents the Lear Jet (see SSR 7), and the Gliders represent the various light aircraft (Beechcraft, Cessnas, etc.) parked at the airport. In the early versions of the scenario, there were also two abandoned trucks in the PDF set up area; however, these were eliminated from the scenario because it was too easy for the U.S. to



capture them and use them at will on the board--usually to block the runway, but other nefarious deeds were threatened also. Since these things could be done *without risk* to the U.S. once the trucks were captured, they were dropped from play.

#### United States of America

The U.S. OB is quite simple: two platoons of SF crews, with various SW and leadership available. I thought that any Special Forces unit would bring along some sort of explosives; hence the DCs. The U.S. units enter in two groups to simulate the movement of the two platoons up the runway.

#### VICTORY CONDITIONS

Happily, the VC are quite simple. The U.S. goal in this situation was very obviously to prevent Noriega from using this airport as a means of escape from Panama. Therefore, the destruction of his Lear Jet is imperative, in addition to the need to block the runway to prevent other aircraft from using the airfield should the U.S. fail to control it. The Casualty provision is probably somewhat misstated as it reads: the U.S. player need only get a big body count of PDF to keep them from the automatic win at Game End. This probably would not fit into the U.S. goal of good public relations through as few Panamanian casualties as possible. My *intent* with this provision was to allow the PDF to "win" if the *cost to the U.S. in casualties was too great*--therefore, the VC probably should have read "Provided the PDF has not earned X Casualty VPs..." (where X = 8? or 10?). Anyway, the unstated encouragement here is to have the PDF attempt to *capture* an SF crew, where they would get *eight* Casualty VP at Game End--and in order to circumvent this the U.S. would need to eliminate nearly half of the PDF force (the capture of a SF crew actually occurred during our tournament playing of this scenario).

#### BALANCE PROVISIONS

In keeping with the "there are a lot of other things complicated here, let's keep as much as simple as possible" theme, the Balance Provisions are. The PDF can, prior to play, Battle Harden any two SMC/MMC. The U.S. may add a Hero to the Turn 1 forces. Both of these are easy-to-implement provisions that won't drastically alter the game, while providing enough of a change to make them desirable to receive. One of the tournament scenarios was played with the PDF getting the "Battle Harden any two SMC/MMC" provision.

#### BOARDS/TERRAIN

If the need for new counters for this scenario is one of it's biggest drawbacks, then the other is the use of a non-standard mapboard. Unfortunately, in reading McConnell's account of this action, I formed an incredibly strong visual image of what I thought the battlefield should look like, and it meshed very nicely with all the other aspects of the scenario as I was formulating them. I rejected boards 14 and 38 (the airfield boards) almost immediately as not being close enough to what I wanted. Next I toyed with the idea of making my own overlay--this would have the advantage of being based on an existing board and being relatively easy to produce using a color copier. Again I searched for eligible boards on which to base the overlay; unfortunately, the more I thought about it and the more I tinkered around I decided that it would be incredibly simpler to start from scratch and do an entire board of my own design. This would have the advantage of not needing to match any other board for size (reproductions are often a bit smaller than the original, depending on the setting of the copier) or color (while color copiers are highly-touted for their high quality color reproductions, I have learned that they are notoriously poor at recreating *exact* color matches). So, I did my own half-board, tailored specifically for use with *Grounding Noriega*. I put in all the elements that I had mapped out in my imagination: the long runway with accompanying taxiways, the Hangars, Street Lights, road outside the perimeter and the high-rise apartments just across the street. I drew it all out and painted it up, even including the white hex center dots. Unfortunately, the color copies loose quite a bit in the translation. The light green background washes-out to a poor yellow, and many of the hex center dots are nearly indistinguishable. Still, it does the job of recreating the Paitilla Airport, and it does



look rather good. As a side note, three weeks after I finished the map I found out that my brother-in-law was in Panama for his annual National Guard training. I hurriedly attempted to get in contact with him to have him bring me an actual map of the area, but to no avail. Thus, the first *Modern ASL* Scenario missed it's chance to become the first *Modern Historical ASL* Scenario.

### SPECIAL RULES

In spite of the use of three pages of *Modern ASL* rules, there was still a need for copious Special Rules on the scenario card itself. These Special Rules provide much of the flavor for this scenario, and they also identify the PDF player as holding the initiative in regards to when the *fighting* will start.

SSR 1 provides the basics for the scenario, including the EC and any changes in the physical environment. Likewise SSR 2 covers all of the particulars of the use of Night rules. I did away with the raising of the SAN, since I didn't want it very high for either side.

Limitations placed on/freedoms given to the PDF are provided by SSR 3. In playtests, the PDF players tended to illuminate the entire board, so I limited their Starshell ability to the leaders only. The unarmed HS are covered as well: since they are technically not considered "PDF personnel," they are given more freedom than usual for Defending units. A vigorous PDF player will make use of them for various activities before the battle is joined with the main U.S. force.

The U.S. Special Forces crew capabilities are further defined here, with other minor notes on U.S. equipment abilities. I limited the number of M136 LAW shots that the U.S. player could take, primarily because I didn't want the U.S. to be using them solely for blowing the PDF out of the control tower, but to use them primarily to eliminate the Lear Jet.

SSR 5 are the Rules of Engagement for the U.S. player, which limits what that player can do until such time as the PDF opens fire on them. As such, this SSR actually identifies the PDF player as holding much of the initiative throughout the first "cat and mouse" portion of this scenario. Until such time as the PDF fires on a U.S. unit, the U.S. must keep their superior firepower in check. This advantage, if played carefully, can allow the PDF to pull the U.S. into a killing ground of their choosing, and enable them to spring the trap when it best serves the PDF ends.

SSR 6 and 7 deal with the parked aircraft dispersed about the environs of the airport. These aircraft had to be able to be moved about by the various forces on the board, so they were handled in much the same way as Manhandling Guns. These SSRs also clarified the status of the aircraft in terms of sighting purposes, as well as limiting when the PDF could fire on them. This latter limitation was added to keep the PDF player from destroying all the parked aircraft in their initial hexes, thereby preventing the U.S. from using them as runway blocks. I decided that as "airfield guards," the PDF units would see their job as being to *protect* the aircraft parked there rather than destroying them on purpose.

The final SSR clarifies several of the Night rules for purposes of this scenario.

### WORDS OF THANKS

I had many people provide help and guidance in the preparation of this scenario, as well as in it's execution at the Gamex 1993 tournament. I thank Chris Castellana, Tim Drushal, Gary Fortenberry and Cloyde Angell for their general encouragement in these *ASL* projects. I would also like to thank Tim, Jon Moore, Jim Millard and Mike Reed for their assistance with things involving their jobs, and especially Jim for holding out for things to be the way he saw them. I didn't always go his way, but he made his point of view known. I thank Wayne Isbell of Varo, Inc. for spending time with me on Image Intensification Sights.



Thanks to all the people who participated in my first tournament, and especially Cloyde Angell, Tim Williams, Rob Stai, David Myers, Ron Mosher, and David Rosner for not crucifying me when they saw what they had to play, and Steve Sulzby for providing the opportunity. Thanks to Jon Moore for providing the encouragement to do this *Modern ASL* scenario by saying that it couldn't--and shouldn't--be done. Finally, thanks to John Knowles for all his help, time, and encouragement, and for standing by when all looked bleak. I would never have been able to accomplish this work without all John's input.

#### ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS CITED FOR THIS SCENARIO

McConnell, Malcolm. *Just Cause: The Real Story of America's High-Tech Invasion of Panama*. New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1992. 340 pp. McConnell provides a very nice tactical-level narrative of the fighting at the airport, and it provided the structure upon which much of this scenario was built. He obviously did a considerable amount of research to put together this work, and his various chapter notes are of considerable interest themselves. McConnell's work is quite critical of much of the reporting that went on during the fighting, describing much of it as gathered through rumor and poorly verified (my original impression of PDF armored cars causing a serious set-back to the SEALs at Paitilla Airport came from a news story; McConnell specifically mentions this mistake). Many of the Special Operations (i.e., Special Forces) missions undertaken during Operation Just Cause are covered in some detail by McConnell, and there is material for more "SF crew" scenarios--not to mention standard infantry-type engagements. The criticisms I can level at this book would be that most of the story is from the U.S. point of view, and that I didn't learn much about the organization or weapons of the forces engaged. The latter point, however, is a thin one, since this is not the "reason for being" of this book. Also, much of these criticisms are lost in McConnell's narrative style, which paints very strong visual pictures of the events that occurred (see my comments in the Boards/Terrain section above). This work is highly recommended for those interested in modern combat actions.

Rottman, Gordon. *Panama 1989-90*. Osprey Military Elite Series 37. Ed. Martin Windrow. London: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 1991. 64 pp. While Rottman's work provides only a paragraph on the Paitilla Airport action, it does provide a considerable amount of background information that was invaluable in the work-ups for the force structures in this scenario, especially for the PDF. Additionally, this volume proved an excellent source for the Chapter R Nationality Distinctions rules. This series of works attempts to provide a visual representation of the battles that they describe, and this work does this through the use of photographs as well as high-quality color plates by Ron Volstad. Unfortunately, some of the photographs are of poor quality. However, Rottman's text provides a good overview of the entire operation, as well as covering the PDF in better detail than I had ever seen available. I highly recommend this book, which fills some of the holes in the McConnell book. When used in concert, these two provide much of the basis needed to do many of the Panama scenarios.